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LADY HESTER LUCY STANHOPE



Hester Lucy Stanhope

LADY HESTER LUCY STANHOPE: A New Light on Her

Life and Love Affairs. By FRANK HAMEL

Author of "An Eighteenth Century Marquise," "Jean de la Fontaine," "The Dauphines of France," etc. etc.

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PREFACE

IN his six volumes of "Memoirs of Lady Hester Stanhope" and "Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope" Dr. Meryon, her physician, confined himself chiefly to material which he gathered from her Ladyship's conversation and such portions of her correspondence as came into his hands. More than half a century after the publication of these works the late Duchess of Cleveland's loyal and detailed life of her aunt was privately printed, in 1897. Besides referring to Dr. Meryon's MSS., the Duchess had access to family papers he had never seen; but even then there are many incidents of Lady Hester's story of which the Duchess was ignorant, or which she chose to pass over in silence. In the first place, she does not mention Lady Hester's love affair with Michael Bruce, and her magnanimity in giving him up when the time came for him to follow his career in England—a career which unfortunately did not turn out as brilliantly as Lady Hester expected. This episode is the pivot upon which Lady Hester's Eastern experiences turn. I gathered it by piecing together passages from her own letters, hitherto suppressed by, or unknown to, her biographers, extracts from Dr. Meryon's letters which have come into my possession and have never been printed

Preface

before, and various other documents, collected for the first time to form a complete account.

In the second place, the Duchess of Cleveland never attempted to solve the question of the possibility of Lady Hester's marriage or love affair with an Arab sheik, a matter which Lady Hester refused to discuss openly to the close of her life. I can find no documentary references to this marriage, and it is impossible to make a definite statement upon merely hearsay evidence. The report has reached me, however, from so many more or less reliable sources, that it is impossible to ignore it altogether. I have talked with several people who remember friends in the East who had *seen and spoken to* Lady Hester's "husband," but no name has been divulged. Lady Burton, when writing of the Hon. Jane Digby (Lady Ellenborough) in her Memoirs, said she was worthy to be Lady Hester's successor. Jane Digby married a sheik by Mahometan rites, or, as Miss Stisted crudely puts it, in her *Life of Sir Richard Burton*, she "capped her wild career by marrying a camel driver." There may be something in the suggestion that confusion has arisen between the stories of these two Englishwomen who found romance in the desert. Lady Hester was too proud to marry any Arab but the highest in rank, so that the choice of possible persons is not a large one, and in time the solution to this—probably the last—important unsolved problem of her life may come to light. Considering for a moment the possibility of a foundation of fact for these persistent rumours, it seems probable that the alliance with an Arab sheik must have taken place about 1820, at the time of Meryon's second visit. His mention

Preface

v

of this visit is mysteriously brief, being dismissed cursorily in the opening chapter to the "Memoirs" with the words, "Her Ladyship had in the meanwhile completely familiarised herself with the usages of the East, conducting her establishment entirely in the Turkish manner . . . Under these circumstances . . . I again bade her adieu." (See p. 239.)

At the time when the Duchess of Cleveland wrote her book it was no doubt impossible for her to have had access to the information about Lady Hester included in my chapter on "Lady Hester *intime*," taken from the valuable new Meryon manuscripts, and in hitherto unpublished letters from her to Mr. Nassau Sutton, General Grenville, Lord Strangford, Mr. Silk Buckingham, and many others; but she might have made use of the various facts contained in Lady Hester's will, which I may confidently say she never saw. The will (given *in extenso* at p. 314) is important because it proves without question that Lady Hester intended to return to England when she sailed for Gibraltar in 1810. Lady Hester left all her personal estate to her half-brother, the Hon. James Stanhope, or, in case of his death, to Colonel Paul Anderson. No other member of the family was mentioned in the will except the Hon. Charles Stanhope, who was killed at Corunna in 1809, before the codicils were added. After the death of Lady Hester, Colonel Anderson, the surviving executor and residuary legatee, repounced probate and execution of her will and codicils, whereupon (in 1844) letters of administration, with the will and three codicils annexed, of her estate were granted to the attorneys of Messrs. Cababé and Sons, and Jacob Abello and Antoon Misk, to whom the claims of

her creditors had been assigned. I have before me an interesting note from the present representative of the Cababé family, which shows that his grandfather and Mr. Misk, of the British Consulate in Beirut, subsequently dealt with the property.

The question whether Lady Hester wished to have her biography written has never been satisfactorily settled, but her letter to the Doctor in 1829 asking him to burn every scrap of her writing would point to the probability that she preferred oblivion. In the ten years that followed before she died, however, she changed her mind. At all events, Dr. Meryon declared that she did so. When, under this impression, he published three volumes of "Memoirs" in 1845 and three of "Travels" in 1846 he was severely criticised by his reviewers for disclosing to the world private matters communicated to him by Lady Hester during professional attendance; but after a careful study of his biographical material it must be conceded that on the whole he was very fair to her. He wrote nothing which might have compromised her, and he omitted from his letters between 1810 and 1817 any passages which could have led to a revelation of her more intimate confidences. It is from these autograph letters, written on the spot and untouched by the mature reflection which coloured the published version given to the world some thirty years later, that I have drawn much of my information. The Doctor was very human, and though many people have blamed him for a few obvious failings, they have not taken sufficiently into account the hardships of his situation, the real interest he took in Lady Hester, his genuine admira-

Preface

vii

tion for her talents, and his wish to refute the absurd and scandalous reports which circulated freely about her in England. I do not intend here to hold a brief for Dr. Meryon, but taking into consideration circumstances in his life with which the public are not familiar, it seems to me that he has had but scant justice shown to him, and that those who take exception to his conduct might have acted in much the same manner had they been placed in his difficult position.

It is not surprising, considering the strange facts of Lady Hester's life, that (as one of her admirers said) "the bare mention of her Ladyship's name has repeatedly awakened intense curiosity," more especially amongst those of her own sex, and I venture to think that the new light thrown upon this extraordinary woman by the following chapters will justify their existence.

I have to express my indebtedness to many kind friends who have helped me in the preparation of my book, and especially to Mr. A. M. Broadley and Mr. R. Nassau Sutton Nelthorpe for their courtesy in placing some original letters at my disposal.

FRANK HAMEL.

London, 1913.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
LIST OF AUTHORITIES	xiii
GENEALOGICAL TABLE	xvi
 CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTORY	1
II. GIRLHOOD (1776-91)	5
III. IN SOCIETY (1792-99)	13
IV. LADY HESTER'S BROTHERS (1800-1)	20
V. PITT, THE "GREAT MAN" (1801-2)	27
VI. VOLUNTEERING AT WALMER (1803-4)	33
VII. PITT'S LAST YEARS (1804-6).	40
VIII. SIR JOHN MOORE (1807-8)	54
IX. A VISIT TO WALES (1809)	62
X. MALTA (1810)	72
XI. AN ILL-ASSORTED TRIO.	82
XII. A GLIMPSE OF BYRON	89
XIII. MICHAEL BRUCE	96
XIV. PASSION AND POLITICS (1811)	107
XV. SHIPWRECK	119
XVI. EGYPT (1811)	124
XVII. THE HOLY LAND (1812)	128
XVIII. AMONG THE ARAB TRIBES	136

Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIX. PALMYRA (1813)	143
XX. DEPARTURE OF MICHAEL BRUCE	163
XXI. MAB ELIAS (1814), LADY HESTER <i>intime</i>	177
XXII. MESHMUSHY	184
XXIII. ASCALON (1815)	196
XXIV. "SHEIK IBRAHIM"	205
XXV. BANKES AND BUCKINGHAM (1816)	211
XXVI. DR. MERYON LEAVES THE EAST (1817)	230
XXVII. A VISIT FROM MADDEN	238
XXVIII. MERYON'S RETURN	257
XXIX. LAMARTINE AND KINGLAKE	263
XXX. MERYON'S LAST VISIT	274
XXXI. PÜCKLER-MUSKAU	285
XXXII. FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES	290
XXXIII. DEATH AND BURIAL	305
XXXIV. CONCLUSION	311
APPENDIX A. LADY HESTER STANHOPE'S WILL	314
„ B. THE PROBATE ACT	320
„ C. LIST OF LADY HESTER'S EFFECTS ON LEAVING ENGLAND	324
INDEX	331

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Lady Hester Stanhope in Eastern dress. From a drawing by R. J. Hamerton	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	TO FACE PAGE
William Pitt, 1st Earl of Chatham: Lady Hester's maternal grandfather. From the painting by Richard Brompton .	8
Charles Stanhope, 3rd Earl Stanhope: Lady Hester's father. From a drawing by Henry Richter	16
The Right Hon. William Pitt: Lady Hester's uncle. From the painting by John Hoppner, R.A.	32
Walmer Castle, Kent. From a lithograph of about 1820 .	48
Lieut.-Gen. Sir John Moore, K.B. From an engraving after a sketch by J. J. Hall	60
Reduced facsimile of a letter written by Lady Hester, March 30th, 1804	80
Michael Bruce and his fellow defendants in the Lavalette case. From a drawing by Augustin Neven	106
A View of Sayda (Sidon) looking towards Lebanon. From the drawing by David Roberts, R.A.	130
A View of Palmyra, showing the Site of Lady Hester's entry. Reduced from one of the plates published by Woods and Dawkins in 1753	158
Emir Beshyr, Prince of the Druses. From C. H. Churchill's "Mount Lebanon," 1853	176

List of Illustrations

	TO FACE PAGE
Equestrian portrait of Lady Hester in Eastern dress. From the drawing by R. J. Hamerton	194
"Sheik Ibrahim," John Lewis Burckhardt. From Burckhardt's "Travels in Syria and the Holy Land," 1822	206
Reduced facsimile of letter in Arabic from Lady Hester, recommending Mr. William Bankes to the care of Mâlem Haym	212
Equestrian portrait of James Silk Buckingham in Eastern dress. From a coloured lithograph	224
Dr. Meryon in Bedouin dress. From Meryon's "Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope," 1846	240
Dr. R. R. Madden attending a Lady of the Harem. From Madden's "Travels," 1833	256
Lady Hester entertaining a visitor in her Reception-room at Djoun. From a drawing by R. J. Hamerton	268
Prince Pückler-Muskau. From the portrait by C. Brandt	288
A View of Djoun, Lady Hester's home on Mount Lebanon. From a lithograph	310

LIST OF AUTHORITIES

The following is a list of the principal books, magazines, journals, etc., consulted; but, as pointed out in the Preface, the author has had access to, and permission to make use of, a large number of unpublished letters from Lady Hester herself, Dr. Meryon and other contemporaries who are able to throw light upon the subject.

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* A pseudonym adopted by Dr. Meryon.

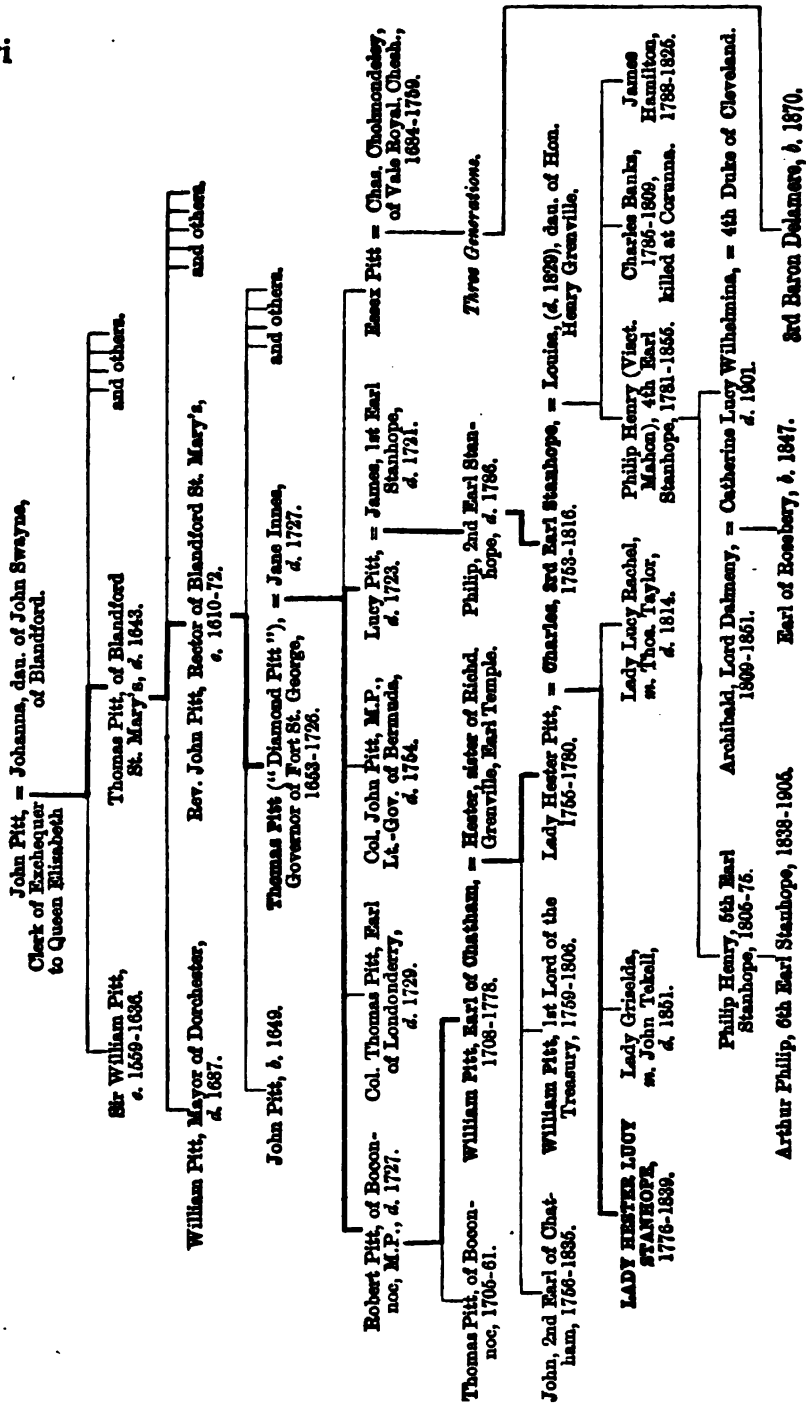
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LADY HESTER STANHOPE: GENEALOGICAL TABLE.



Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

MORE than a century has passed since Lady Hester Stanhope sailed from the shores of England never to return. It was then an unheard-of thing for an unmarried woman of her rank to roam about the world at her own sweet will without giving her friends some idea of how long she intended to stay away. No sooner was her back turned than ill-natured remarks were made about her journey, and, as time went on and she still remained abroad, her reasons for severing her connection with home were freely discussed.

Ideas about travelling have changed considerably. To-day there are many women who do not choose to stay by the fireside. They explore untrodden fields and are thought enterprising and emancipated. At the worst they might be called odd, but Lady Hester was looked upon as wildly eccentric,* if not mad, and she risked the loss of her position in society. She was reticent about herself, and reticence in her hands was a two-edged weapon.

She imposed silence on Dr. Charles Lewis Meryon, the physician of her household, who accompanied her on her

* She "was to develop so fierce an eccentricity."—"Pitt," by Lord Rosebery, 1891, p. 238. ("Twelve English Statesmen" Series.)

Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

travels, and he respected her wishes until after her death. When writing to his parents from Mount Lebanon on September 1st, 1814, he begged them not to read any part of his letters to their friends.

"Pray, if you consult my interest," he wrote, "be mute upon everything. Nobody knows how much mischief results from disclosing the most trifling things to one's acquaintance, who praise before one's face and abuse behind one's back, and are careless what detriment they do by indiscreetly retailing what they hear, with embellishments of their own coining. Little people, like myself, may wander over the world, and nobody cares where they go and whither they come; but great ones are not so much at liberty: their most trifling motions are watched, and they always dislike publicity should be given to anything they do, except when they have some purpose to answer by it. I no more think of mentioning Lady Hester's name to every indifferent person I meet than I think of flying, and I hope you will consider that whatever I say is meant only for the ears of my parents and my brothers and sister." *

Lady Hester's reserve was productive of much speculation. People wanted to know why she went to the East and stayed there until she became Oriental.

They inquired whether affairs of the heart, affairs of the conscience, or affairs of the purse were the reasons for her self-imposed exile. The weakness of her financial standing in later years was published in the newspapers, but no one knew exactly what parts love and conscience played in her life; or, if they knew, they did not care to say. Although her biographers were aware that gossip had blackened her name, they did not attempt either to refute or to prove the charges made against her. When Meryon published a voluble account of her doings and

* From a MS. letter, dated September 1st, 1814, in the possession of the author and hitherto unpublished.

sayings after her death he was taken severely to task. But his story was fair to her on the whole, and he was careful to suppress facts which might have injured her and with which he must have been familiar. The Duchess of Cleveland had access to Dr. Meryon's manuscripts and to many family papers and letters which he had never seen, but she was no more frank than he in revealing this side of her aunt's life. Recent discovery, however, throws a fresh light on some of the causes which kept Lady Hester wandering in the East until she had neither will nor desire to return, a state of mind she did not arrive at until about 1815.

She went abroad and stayed there through stress of circumstance, but a more powerful hereditary force was at work long before moulding her life. Destiny was busy with her future at the end of the seventeenth century, when her ancestor, Thomas Pitt, known as "Diamond Pitt," was a zealous East India trader. His son Robert was grandfather of Lady Hester's mother, and his daughter Lucy was grandmother of her father.* His blood, wrote Lord Rosebery, "came all aflame from the East, and flowed like burning lava to his remotest descendants, with the exception of Chatham's children; but even then it blazed up again in Hester Stanhope."† Like her, he seems to have ruled those about him "with the notions of absolutism which are associated with the Oriental monarchies." She was atavistic, a reversion to type, and undoubtedly inherited from her great-great-grandfather his spirit of adventure, his love of the pomp and splendour of the East, and his forcible and aggressive attitude.

"Bold, decided, and shrewd himself," wrote the biographer of "Diamond" Pitt, "he held in utter contempt those who

* See Genealogical Table, p. xvi.

† "Chatham, his Early Life and Connections," by Lord Rosebery, 1910, p. 2. (A. L. Humphreys).

4 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

failed in such qualities, and in the frank, unrestrained expression of his sentiments, whether in seriousness or in merciless and rasping chaff, he must often have given offence to friend as well as foe." *

These remarks apply exactly to Lady Hester. The Duchess of Cleveland said much the same in different words. "Her tongue was, in truth, a sharp-edged sword, and gained her many enemies; but she could be eloquent and persuasive, as well as trenchant." † Pitt was "a kind of prototype of the Nabob of half a century later," ‡ and Lady Hester was his feminine counterpart.

* "Diary of William Hedges" (Hakluyt Society), 1889, vol. iii., p. clvii.

† "The Life and Letters of Lady Hester Stanhope," by the Duchess of Cleveland, 1897, p. 4. (Privately printed.)

‡ "Diary of William Hedges" (Hakluyt Society), 1889, vol. iii., p. cxlvii.

CHAPTER II

GIRLHOOD (1776-91)

REFERENCE to the genealogical table on page xvi. makes clear the double relationship that Lady Hester bore to her imperious ancestor.

Thomas Pitt's son, Robert, was the father of Pitt, the Earl of Chatham, who married Hester, only daughter of Richard Grenville and Hester, Countess Temple. Lady Hester Stanhope inherited her first Christian name from her maternal grandmother and her mother, Lady Hester Pitt. Her second name, Lucy, came to her from Lucy Pitt, daughter of Thomas Pitt, and wife of the first Earl Stanhope. The second Earl was Philip, whose son Charles married Lady Hester Pitt.

The wedding took place on December 19th, 1774, when Charles was still Lord Mahon. The Rev. Francis Fawkes, Rector of Hayes, addressed the following lines to the bridegroom, making a delicate allusion to his well-known Republican attitude :

When gentle hearts in faithful union join,
And mix the Hero's with the Patriot line,
With every charm uniting every grace,
And all the virtues of the Temple race,
The happy omen we with joy admit,
And bless the match of Stanhope and of Pitt.*

Two years after the marriage Lady Hester Stanhope

* "Correspondence of William Pitt, Earl Chatham," edited by Taylor and Fringle 1898, vol. iv., p. 373.

6 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

was born, on March 12th, 1776, at Chevening, Kent. She was baptised, on April 7th, at St. Marylebone Parish Church.* Her mother gave birth to two other daughters, Griselda and Lucy Rachel, and died in 1780. Six months later Mahon married his deceased wife's cousin, Louisa, daughter of the Hon. Henry Grenville. Lady Hester's early upbringing was therefore left in the hands of her stepmother and her father, neither of them capable of curbing her high spirits or of teaching her control or restraint.

Born in 1753, Lord Mahon established a claim to originality and genius early in life. He was sent to Eton at an early age, and thence to Geneva. On June 3rd, 1764, Lady Hervey, a friend of the family, wrote of Lady Stanhope: "She and her lord are going, with their only remaining son, to Geneva, where they think, and I can easily believe, he may be much better educated than first at one of our great schools and after at one of our universities."† In Geneva Mahon imbibed, according to the opinion of Sir N. W. Wraxall, "strong republican, or rather levelling principles, ill adapted to a man whose high birth and prospects should naturally have inspired him with sentiments more favourable to monarchy."‡ The same author described the appearance of Lady Hester's father as "tall and thin, his countenance expressive of ardour and impetuosity, as were all his movements. Over his whole figure, and even his dress, an air of Puritanism reminded the beholder of the sectaries under Cromwell rather than a young man of quality in an age of refinement

* Extract from the baptismal register of 1776: "April 7. Hester Lucy Stanhope, daughter of Charles Stanhope Lord Viscount Mahon and Lady Hester, born 12th ulto."

† "Letters of Mary Lepel, Lady Hervey," 1821, pp. 303-4. (Murray.)

‡ "The Historical and the Posthumous Memoirs of Sir N. W. Wraxall" Ed. Wheatley, 1884, 5 vols., vol. iii., see pp. 401-2.

and elegance. He possessed stentorian lungs and a powerful voice, always accompanied with violent gesticulations."

Mahon, like his eldest daughter, was never deterred by the voice of public opinion from doing as he wished. At the age of twenty he one day appeared in society disclosing his natural hair, although everybody else was scrupulously *poudré*. Walpole declared that his father did not permit him to wear powder, because wheat was so dear, and wrote he "was presented t'other day in coal-black hair and a white feather; they said 'he had been *tarred and feathered*.'" *

In Mahon's versatility lay his undoing. He was an inventor, a man of science, a politician, an author, a reformer, and a mechanician. He was keenly in sympathy with the French Revolution, and *Le Moniteur* reported his doings and sayings as though he were a second Condorcet. His experiments with steamboats, his improvements of the printing press, and his methods of rendering buildings fireproof are historic. His views on liberty, equality and fraternity might have had more weight had their effect not been counteracted by despotism in his home circle. His constant exactions made it impossible for his wife and family to live in the same house with him, and they left one by one when the opportunity occurred. Lady Hester, of all his children, alone showed little fear of him. "I could always govern my father better than anybody," she wrote, "because I could bear his oddities with more patience and could *joke* him into things plain sense and argument would have failed in." † But even she was occasionally forced into compliance with his wishes, and Stratford Canning declared that Lord Stanhope, believing

* "The Letters of Horace Walpole" (Paget Toynbee Edition), 1904, vol. ix., p. 24. Letter to H. S. Conway from Strawberry Hill, September 7th, 1774.

† See "The Life and Letters of Lady Hester Stanhope," by the Duchess of Cleveland, 1897, p. 4. (Privately printed.)

in manual labour, had set her regularly to tend turkeys on a common.* Like Mme. de Maintenon, she early showed her power to command, although her subjects were the humblest. In the words of Louis XIV.'s second wife, she might have cried, "I ruled in the poultry yard, and there my reign commenced." †

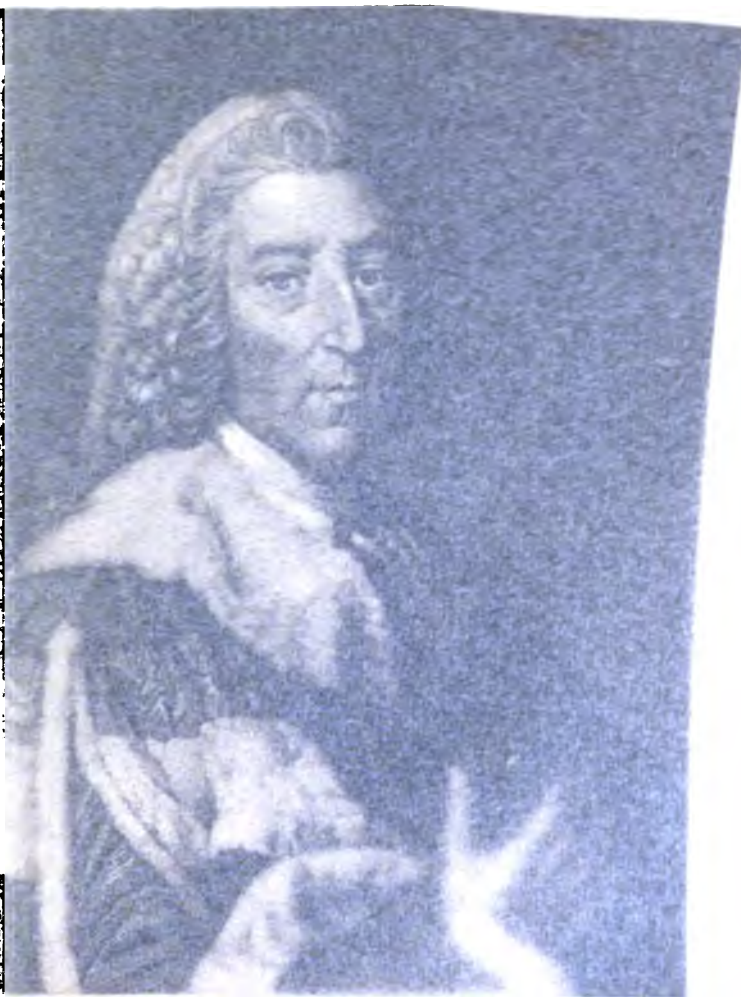
~ Lady Hester was proud of her influence from the first, and exercised it on every occasion and upon all who came within her sphere. Her personal magnetism was great when she chose to exert it. Speaking comparatively, little is known of her early youth, and most of the information available is taken from her reminiscent conversations as reported in later years by Dr. Meryon. She pleaded an excellent memory. "I can recall every circumstance that ever occurred to me during my life," she wrote, "everything worth retaining that I wished to remember. I could tell what people said, how they sat, the colour of their hair, of their eyes, and all about them, at any time for the last forty years and more." ‡ But her pictures of her family and near relatives are not remarkably reliable, although her stories are always entertaining. As a vehicle for self-revelation they could scarcely be bettered. In her gay chatter about the days before she left England, she stands out a winsome and brilliant figure, full of life, wit, ideas, resource, and possessing a certain lithe beauty, a will of her own that brooked no contradiction, originality, a strong sense of her own importance, and acute reasoning powers, often perverted by passion and overweening credulity.

In contrast with her brilliant self, her sisters faded into the background.

* "The Life of Stratford Canning," edited by Stanley Lane Poole, 1898, vol. i., p. 121.

† "Famous French Salons," 1908, p. 161. (Methuen.)

‡ "Memoirs of Lady Hester Stanhope," 1845, vol. ii., p. 12. (Colburn.)



WILLIAM PITT, 1ST EARL OF CHATHAM

(1709-1779)

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Lady Hester's Sisters

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"Lucy was prettier than I was, and Griselda more clever,"* she said. "Lucy's disposition was sweet, and her temper excellent; she was like a Madonna. Griselda was otherwise, and always for making her authority felt. But I, even when I was only a girl, obtained and exercised—I can't tell how—a sort of command over them. They never came to me when I was in my room, without sending first to know whether I would see them."†

Lord Stanhope was not partial to his younger daughters.‡ In Hester he showed a certain amount of interest.

"He would turn to me," she said, "and say, 'Now we must talk a little philosophy,' and then, with his two legs stuck upon the sides of the grate, he would begin. 'Well, well,' he would cry, after I talked a little, 'that is not bad reasoning, but the basis is bad.'

"My father always checked any propensity to finery in dress. If any of us happened to look better than usual in a particular hat or frock, he was sure to have it put away the next day, and to have something coarse substituted in its place.

"When I was young I was always the first to promote my sisters' enjoyments. Whether in dancing, or in riding on horseback, or at a feast, or in anything that was to make them happy, I always had something to do or propose that increased their pleasure. In like manner, afterwards, in guiding them in politics, in giving them advice for their conduct in private life, in forwarding them in the world, I was a means of much good to them. It was always Hester, and Hester, and Hester; in short, I appeared to be the favourite of them all."‡

In after years Lady Hester had no reason to be proud of what she had done for her sisters, for neither of them was well established. Griselda married John Tekell of Hambledon, Hampshire, in August, 1800, and lived to the age of seventy-three, and Lucy eloped with the family

* "Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 9.

† "Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 10.

‡ "Memoirs," vol. ii., pp. 11-12.

Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

apothecary, Thomas Taylor of Sevenoaks. Taylor was asked to give up the career he had chosen, and Pitt found a suitable post for this nephew by marriage.

+ Gillray's drawing, "Democratic Levelling: Alliance à la Française," which caricatured Lord Stanhope's resentful attitude towards the marriage of his daughter Lucy,* was not more pointed than the method by which Lady Hester endeavoured to bring her father to reason when, in one of his Republican fits, he put down his carriages and horses.

"Poor Lady Stanhope," she said, "was quite unhappy about it; but, when the whole family was looking glum and sulky, I thought of a way to set all right again. I got myself a pair of stilts, and out I stumped down a dirty lane, where my father, who was always spying through his glass, could see me. So, when I came home, he said to me, 'Why, little girl, what have you been about? Where was it I saw you going upon a pair of the devil knows what? Eh, girl?'

"'Oh, papa, I thought, as you had laid down your horses, I would take a walk through the mud on stilts; for you know, papa, I don't mind mud or anything. 'Tis poor Lady Stanhope who feels those things; for she has always been accustomed to her carriage, and her health is not very good.'

"'What's that you say, little girl?' said my father, turning his eyes away from me; and, after a pause, 'Well, little girl, what would you say if I bought a carriage again for Lady Stanhope?'

"'Why, papa, I would say it was very kind of you.'

"'Well, well,' he observed, 'we will see; but, damn it! no armorial bearings.' So, some time afterwards, down came a

* See "The Works of James Gillray, the Caricaturist," 1873, p. 201. The Duchess of Cleveland considered that Lord Stanhope approved of the marriage. "Lady Lucy . . . had been married by her father in 1796 to a country surgeon." ("Life and Letters of Lady Hester Stanhope," p. 10.) Lady Lucy died in 1814, leaving a family of seven children.

Childhood

II

new carriage and new horses from London ; and thus, by a little innocent frolic, I made all parties happy again." *

The second Lady Stanhope spent much of her time in having her coiffure attended to by one of the best hair-dressers in London—there were only two who could dress her hair properly. Then she went out to dinner, and from dinner to the opera, and from the opera to parties, seldom returning until just before daylight. The children hardly knew her. They were left to governesses, for their father was too closely wrapped up in his philosophical studies to busy himself with their concerns.

The governesses did what they could to make their unruly young pupils conform to the conventional standards of the day, but their experiments were not remarkably successful. Lady Hester, for one, refused to have her back "pinched in by boards" that were drawn tight with all the force necessary to squeeze her "to the size of a puny miss—a thing impossible." She was proud of her high instep, beneath which she said a little kitten could creep ; proud of her brilliant complexion, of her white teeth, and of her striking and original language, which "caught everybody's attention." She swore eternal warfare against Swiss and French governesses, and indeed against any human being who tried to establish authority over her.

Full of activity from her earliest infancy, not many years of her life had passed before she indulged in an escapade which might have had serious consequences.

At the time of the Revolution, the French Ambassador visited Chevening, and Lady Hester's imagination was stirred so deeply by the fuss and fine feathers of the foot-

* Lord Stanhope caused his armorial bearings to be defaced from his plate. Nothing was spared but the iron gate before the entrance to the house. The tapestry given to the family by the King of Spain he caused to be taken down and put into a corner, calling it all "damned aristocratical." See "*Mansel*," vol. ii., pp. 9-10.

men and the bows and gallant manners of Comte d'Adhémar that she was seized with a longing to visit the country which produced such novel and interesting specimens of the human race. The opportunity occurred when she was sent to Hastings with her governess and her sisters. Unobserved, one day she stepped into a boat which was floating close to the beach, untied the rope, and pushed the boat off, intending to cross the Channel. She was captured and safely brought to land, but the story is characteristic of her daring and resource.

CHAPTER III

IN SOCIETY (1792-99)

BEFORE she was fifteen Lady Hester began to realise the power she possessed over the young men of her acquaintance, and her reminiscences savour of the romantic.

"I can recollect," she said, "when I was ten or twelve years old, going to Hastings's trial. My garter somehow came off, and was picked up by Lord Grey, then a young man. At this hour, as if it were before me in a picture, I can see his handsome but very pale face, his broad forehead, his corbeau coat with out-steel buttons, his white satin waistcoat and breeches, and the buckles in his shoes. He saw from whom the garter fell, but, observing my confusion, did not wish to increase it; and, with infinite delicacy, gave the garter to the person who sat there to serve tea and coffee.

"The first person I ever danced with was Sir Gilbert Heathcote.

"I remember, when I was living with Mr. Pitt, that, one morning after a party, he said to me: 'Really, Hester, Lord Hertford' (the father of the late lord, and a man of high pretensions for his courtly manners) 'paid you so many compliments about your looks last night, that you might well be proud of them.'

"Not at all,' answered I; 'he is deceived if he thinks I am handsome, for I know I am not. If you were to take every feature in my face, and put them one by one on the table, there is not a single one would bear examination. The only thing is that, put together and lighted up, they look well enough. It is homogeneous ugliness, and nothing more.'

"Mr. Pitt used to say to me: 'Hester, what sort of a being

14 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

are you? We shall see, some day, wings spring out of your shoulders, for there are moments when you hardly seem to walk the earth.' | There was a man who had known me well for fifteen years, and he told me one day that he had tried a long time to make me out, but he did not know whether I was a devil or an angel. There have been men who have been intimate with me, and to whom, in point of passion, I was no more than that milk-jug (pointing to one on the table); and there have been others who would go through fire for me." *

Lady Hester never looked more captivating than when on horseback. Her riding was the talk of the district. One day she met Colonel Shadwell near Chevening, and, struck by the beauty of his groom's mount, she wished to look at it from close quarters.

"The colonel eyed me as I passed," she said, relating the incident to Dr. Meryon, "and I, taking advantage of a low part in the hedge, put my horse to it, leaped over, and disappeared in an instant. The colonel found out who I was, and afterwards made such a fuss at the mess about my equestrian powers, that nothing could be like it. I was the toast there every day." †

Royalty itself was attracted by her vivacity and daring. She did not go into society until she was well out of her teens. But stolen pleasure sometimes came her way.

"Nobody ever saw much of me until Lord Romney's review," she said of one such occasion. "I was obliged to play a trick on my father to get there. I pretended the day before that I wanted to pay a visit to the Miss Crumps" (or some such name), "and then went from their house to Lord Romney's. Though all the gentry of Kent were there, my father never knew, or was supposed not to have known, that I had been there. The king took great notice of me. I dined with him—that is, what was called dining with him, but at an adjoining table. Lord

* "Memoirs," vol. ii., pp. 19-21.

† "Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 24.

and Lady Romney served the king and queen, and gentlemen waited on us. Upton changed my plate, and he did it very well. Doctor, dining with royalty, as Lord Melbourne does now, was not so common formerly. I never dined with the king but twice—once at Lord Romney's at an adjoining table, and once afterwards at his own table. Oh, what wry faces there were among some of the courtiers! Mr. Pitt was very much pleased at the reception I met with. The king took great notice of me, and, I believe, always after liked me personally. Whenever I was talking to the dukes, he was sure to come towards us. 'Where is she?' he would cry; 'where is she? I hear them laugh; and where they are laughing, I must go, too.' Then, as he came nearer, he would observe: 'If you have anything to finish, I won't come yet; I'll come in a quarter of an hour.' When he was going away from Lord Romney's, he wanted to put me bodkin between himself and the queen; and when the queen had got into the carriage, he said to her: 'My dear, Lady Hester is going to ride bodkin with us; I am going to take her away from Democracy Hall.' But the old queen observed, in rather a prim manner, that I 'had not got my maid with me, and that it would be inconvenient for me to go at such a short notice.' So I remained.

"It was at that review that I was talking to some officers, and something led to my saying: 'I can't bear men who are governed by their wives, as Sir A. H—— is. A woman of sense, even if she did govern her husband, would not let it be seen; it is odious, in my opinion.' And I went on in this strain, whilst poor Sir A. himself, whom I did not know, but had only heard spoken of, was standing by all the time. I saw a dreadful consternation in the bystanders, but I went on. At last, someone—taking commiseration on him, I suppose, said:

"'Lady Hester, will you allow me to introduce Sir A. H—— to you, who is desirous of making your acquaintance.'

"Sir A. very politely thanked me for the advice I had given him; and I answered something about the regard my brother had for him, and there the matter ended." *

Her wilfulness was apparent to everyone from the day

* "Memoirs" vol. ii., pp. 24-6.

16 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

on which she made her entry into society. The Duchesse de Gontaut, whom Lady Hester described as "a woman quite admirable: so full of resources, so cheerful, and so well-dressed"—all the more because she "was obliged to turn washerwoman and go out to parties in a hackney-coach,"* did not reciprocate her charitable reflections. She thought Pitt's niece too outspoken and too independent to be *comme il faut*. She met her first at a masked garden party.

"Mr. Pitt," she wrote in her Memoirs, "brought up to Mrs. Pole, his niece, Lady Hester Stanhope, and begged her to act chaperon, as it was the young lady's first appearance in society. This proved to be a matter of some difficulty, for Lady Hester seemed at first to be in a very bad temper. Her uncle's introduction seemed to displease her. However, there was nothing for her to do but to join us. She had on a costume which had nothing feminine about it, but the mask. It was the first time I had seen her; she seemed to me very tall, very thin, very decided, very independent. When she heard our donkey *speaking* while we kept silent, she did not hesitate to say that we were more stupid than our ass.†

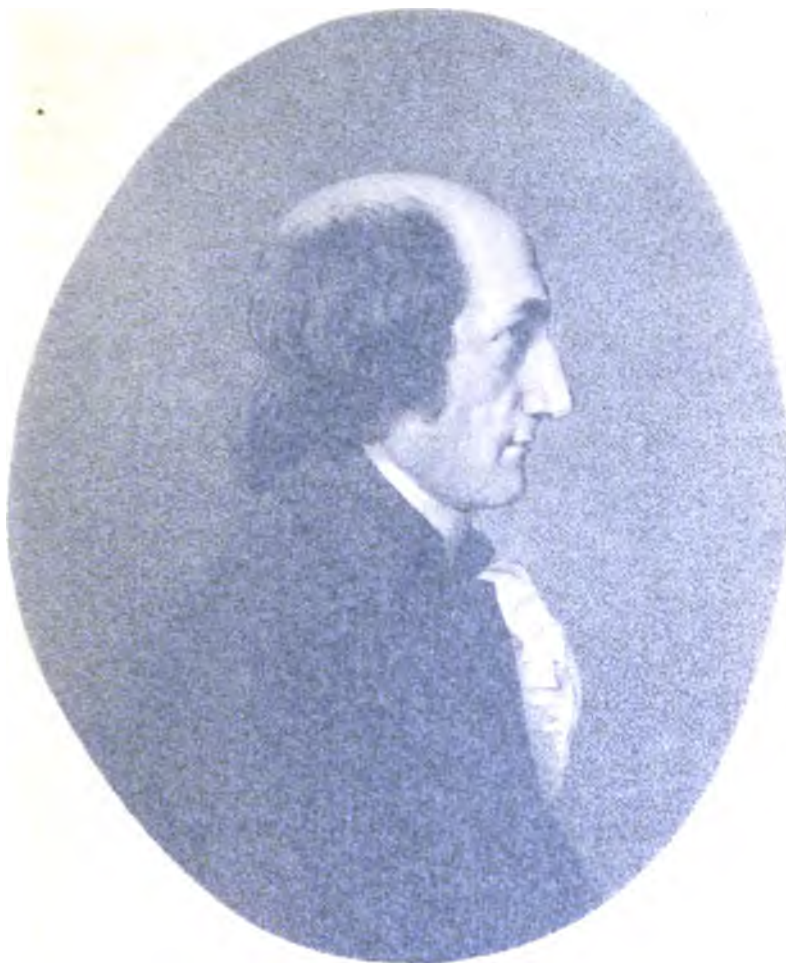
"Lady Clarendon, anxious to fulfil her duties as chaperon, was always running after her, but she could never catch her. When she happened to come anywhere in our direction, she would say to us: 'Don't bother yourself about me; I am quite independent!' And Mrs. Wilmot, our fortune-teller, might have foretold her future from that one day."‡

Lady Hester's descriptions of society were invariably racy:

* "Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 97.

† The ladies were disguised as fortune-tellers, and their spokeswoman, Mrs. Wilmot, was unable to utter a sentence because a donkey, which formed part of their picturesque group, frightened by music, began to bray as soon as she opened her lips.

‡ "Memoirs of the Duchesse de Gontaut" (translated by J. W. Davis), 1894, vol. i., pp. 128-9. (By kind permission of Messrs. Chatto and Windus.)



CHARLES STANHOPE, 3RD EARL STANHOPE (1753-1816).
(Lady Hester's Father.)

CHAPTER I. — *Lucy Stanhope*

Lucy Stanhope was a member of the society. The Duchesse de Morny, who was the first to describe her as "a woman of great resources, so cheerful, and so generous," because she "was obliged to go out to parties in a hackney-coach," was her charitable redoubt. She was too outspoken and too independent to be a member of the society. She met her first at a masked

ball. She was brought up to the society by the Duke of Stanhope, and begged her to go to the ball. It was the young lady's first appearance in society, and it was a matter of some difficulty, for Lady Stanhope, at first, was in a very bad temper. Her uncle's attempt to do her a mischief. However, there was nothing to do but to go on, and she had on a costume which had nothing to do with it, but the mask. It was the first time that she had been so very tall, very thin, very independent. When she heard our donkey *speaking* at the ball, she did not hesitate to say that we were not to be taken into our rest.

Lucy Stanhope, anxious to fulfil her duties as chaperon, was always with her, but she could never catch her. When she was asked to come anywhere in our direction, she would not come. "Do not bother yourself about me; I am quite independent," said Mrs. Wilmot, our fortune-teller, might have been the first to see that one day."†

Lucy Stanhope's descriptions of society were invariably true:

* Mrs. Wilmot, our fortune-teller.

† The Duke of Stanhope, as fortune tellers, and their spokeswoman, Mrs. Wilmot, was not to be taken into our rest because a donkey, which formed part of the furniture of the society, began to bray as soon as she opened

"Memoirs of the Duke of Stanhope" (translated by J. W. Davis), 1894, p. 128-9. (The Duke of Stanhope of Messrs. Chatto and Windus.)



CHARLES STANHOPE, 3RD EARL STANHOPE (1753-1816).
(Lady Hester's Father.)

"I remember," she declared, "what a heavy, dull business the Duchess of R.'s parties were; the rooms so stuffed with people that one could not move, and all so heavy; a great deal of high breeding and *bon ton*, but there was, somehow, nothing to enliven you. Now and then some incident would turn up to break the spell. One evening, I recollect very well, everybody was suffering with the heat; there we were, with nothing but heads to be seen like bottles in a basket. I got out of the room upon the landing-place. There I found Lady Sefton, Lady Heathcote, and some of your highflyers; and somebody was saying to me, 'Lady Hester, something,' when, half-way up the staircase, the Duke of Cumberland was trying to make his way. He cried out: 'Where's Lady Hester? Where's my aide-de-camp? Come and help me; for I am so blind I can't get on alone. Why, this is h—l and d—n!' 'Here I am, sir.' 'Give me your hand, there's a good little soul. Do help me into this h—l; for it's quite as hot.' Then came Bradford; and, whilst he was speaking to me, and complaining of the intolerable heat and crush, out roared the Duke of Cumberland: 'Where is she gone to?' And up went his glass, peeping about to the right and left. 'Where is she gone to?' There was some life in him, doctor.

"Now, at the Duchess of Gordon's there were people of the same fashion, and the crowd was just as great; but then she was so lively, and everybody was so animated, and seemed to know so well what they were about—quite another thing.

"As for the Duchess of D.'s, there they were, all that set, all yawning, and wanting the evening to be spent, that they might be getting to the business they were after."*

Lady Hester never could endure dullness, and the Comtesse de Boigne, who met her at Lady Harrington's, thought her very bright and charming.

"At the time of which I speak," she wrote, "Lady Hester was a handsome girl of twenty, tall and well made, fond of society, of dancing, and of any public function. She was something of a flirt, and a very decided character, with ideas of

* "Memoirs," vol. ii., pp. 52-3.

striking originality. These, however, did not pass the limits of so-called eccentricity. For a Stanhope [some words suppressed] she was prudence itself.

"Pitt," she continued, "had appointed himself chaperon of his niece, and remained with infinite kindness until four or five o'clock in the morning at balls which wearied him to distraction. I have often seen him sitting in a corner, waiting with exemplary patience until Lady Hester should be pleased to end his sufferings." *

The Comtesse de Boigne stated that Pitt, to save his niece from the tender mercies of her unsympathetic father, had taken her into his household, but she ignored the fact that when Lady Hester left Chevening, whence her sisters had already fled, she went to live with her grandmother, Lady Chatham, at Burton Pynsent in Somersetshire. This was a move for the better in some respects, but no doubt Lady Hester regretted the change from the one-time magnificence of Chevening to the comparative simplicity of Burton Pynsent. It was to the earlier scenes of the Kentish seat that her recollections, blurred by intervening events, turned most readily in after years. The wonderful stories she told of her father's house have been discounted. In contrast with her own failing prosperity in 1837, the picture of hundreds of tenants sitting down at Chevening to a good dinner on New Year's Eve glowed in her memory.

"At all the accustomed festivals plum puddings, that required two men to carry them, with large barons of beef, were dressed," she said. "All the footmen were like gentlemen ushers, all the masters and mistresses like so many ambassadors and ambassadresses, such form and etiquette were preserved in all the routine of visits and parties. Every person kept his station,

* "Memoirs of the Comtesse de Boigne" (translated), 1907, vol. I., p. 137. Heinemann.)

and precise rules were laid down for each inmate of the family. Thus, the lady's-maid was not allowed to wear white, nor curls, nor heels to her shoes, beyond a certain height; and Lady Stanhope had in her room a set of instruments and implements of punishment to enforce her orders on all occasions. There were scissors to cut off fine curls, a rod to whip with,* etc., etc. . . . An ox was killed every week and a sheep every day," † she added, speaking of ordinary occasions.

In comparison with Chevening the household at Burton Pynsent was unpretentious. The widowed Lady Chatham lived quietly with her companion, Mrs. Stapleton, and her granddaughter, Harriet Eliot. Lady Hester, who revered the memory of her famous grandfather, was fond of her grandmother, and thought her cousin a "sweet, amiable creature"; but the monotony of life in the Somersetshire village would ill have suited her had it not been interrupted by visits to Bath, to Dawlish, to Newmarket, and to London.

* It is probable that at this point Lady Hester's ideas of the treatment of servants in the East prevailed over those she had experienced long years before in the West.

† "Memoirs," vol. ii., pp. 208-10.

CHAPTER IV

LADY HESTER'S BROTHERS (1800-1)

LADY HESTER broke away from home in 1800, and, her anxiety on her sisters' account being laid to rest—for both were married—she turned her attention to bettering the conditions under which her half-brothers lived. They had never been to school, but were taught in desultory fashion by Jeremiah Joyce,* Lord Stanhope's secretary, who was arrested for his revolutionary principles early in the morning of May 4, 1794, "as he was blowing his nose preparatory to coming down to breakfast," as Lady Hester put it. James and Charles worked at rude tasks in a smithy and shoemaker's shop, and there seemed little chance of successful careers for them unless they were removed from their father's influence.

Lady Hester busied herself to good purpose, and the result was that the eldest of her half-brothers, Lord Mahon, escaped to the Continent. Lord Stanhope wished to break the entail, and worked upon Mahon's feelings in the hope of getting him to agree to this. The danger existed so long as Mahon remained at Chevening. When he had left, Lady Hester said pertly that her father might now "make

* Joyce was the author of many educational works, among which is the "Scientific Dialogues," which was revised by Pinnock and others, and is still in use in the smaller private schools. His arrest was on a charge of high treason, but he was released in November, 1794, without trial. He died in 1816, the same year as Earl Stanhope.

Flight of Lord Mahon

21

Chevening frightful by destroying timber," but could not otherwise injure the estate.

On March 22nd, 1801, Lord Mahon was enrolled as a student at Erlangen University.* The anxiety his sister went through on his behalf temporarily injured her health. On February 1st, 1801, she wrote to Mrs. Stapleton, saying that Lord Stanhope had sent expresses "all ways after Mahon" to Sir Francis Burdett, who had supplied money for the journey, to Mr. Pitt, to Mr. Scott, to the Stanhope girls, "all perfectly ignorant of where he is or anything about him. I have certainly fretted myself almost to death about his situation." She adds that she is only anxious about her father not exposing himself, and hopes that this event will teach him a lesson that will guide him in his attitude towards his other sons.

Lady Hester corresponded with the Earl of Haddington,† and to him she told the story of her brother's flight in a letter dated from Burton Pynsent on March 29th, to which he replied on April 3rd, that he was happy to hear that her brother was advantageously settled. He told her that he had no doubt Lord Mahon would turn out as satisfactorily as his friends could wish, both in public and private life. He encouraged Lady Hester in the course she had taken, explaining that his knowledge of her mother's character led him to believe that her advice would be to act steadily and without fear at this juncture of affairs, and to keep her own counsel.

He remembered her mother as "a woman rarely to be met with, wise, temperate, and prudent, by nature cheerful

* *Personalstand der Friedrich—Alexanders Universität, Erlangen, in ihrem ersten Jahrhundert*, Erlangen, 1843, p. 153. Entry 1801, No. 6, Mahon, Lord, Phil. Heinr. b. in England.

† Charles, eighth Earl of Haddington, born July 5th, 1753. Married Lady Sophia Hope. He died March 17th, 1828. His son was Thomas, Lord Binning. Married, November 23rd, 1802, Maria, daughter of George, fourth Earl of Macclesfield.

without levity, a warm friend, and free from all the petty vices that attend little minds."

Lady Hester replied on April 16th, apologising for troubling him about her family affairs. She was charmed with the character of her mother as Lord Haddington had depicted it in his letter.

In May, Lady Hester went from Bath to Oxford, where she met Lord Haddington's son, Lord Binning. She gave him an account of Lord Mahon, whom she described as "this amiable and once unfortunate being." Mahon had written expressing his gratitude for her help, and regretting the large demand he had made upon her sympathies. With his letter he sent a miniature which he hoped she would accept as a token of his affection.

He wrote from Erlangen on April 6th, 1801, that he was sending the portrait of himself as a mark of the gratitude which he owed her for many kindnesses, and he was sorry it was not a better likeness and more worthy of his sister's acceptance. He assured her that it was his dearest wish that she should be satisfied with the manner in which he conducted himself. He wanted the world to believe he was worthy of being her brother, an honour which he thought those who knew her would not deem inconsiderable.

He then dwelt in his letter on the happiness he felt at having obtained his liberty, and again thanked his sister by whose kindness and unceasing assiduity he had acquired it. At the same time he lamented the fact that in his letters to Lady Hester he had drawn too sad a picture of his life at Chevening, and had represented his misery in too vivid colours. He regretted that the uneasiness he had occasioned her had affected her health, and that he had been the innocent cause of her sickness. Knowing that her mind was formed to pity and alleviate the misfortunes of

others, he understood that his complaints must have caused her the greatest distress. "You bore your own situation with an heroic fortitude, and an unexampled good humour," he exclaimed. "It was my duty to have imitated your example." He then assured her that she was to take comfort from the pleasing hope that he was now as happy as before he had been miserable; that his situation was as charming as it had been odious, and that she must endeavour to dispel her gloominess and keep her mind at rest on his account.

Of Mr. Rice, who had accompanied him abroad, and on his return to England was the bearer of the letter, he wrote: "I believe him to be [a] man of strict integrity another proof of your discernment."

Lord Mahon had great faith in his sister's judgment of character. He did not think she could ever be deceived when she had once formed an opinion of anybody, and he believed that her intuitive penetration, even of those with whom she had formed only a slight acquaintance, was not likely to be mistaken. Nothing could have pleased Lady Hester more than this expression of confidence in her insight. She prided herself all her life on estimating character correctly, and in later years she attributed this gift to her powers of reading the stars.

The letter was signed "H. Phillips," the name which Lord Mahon had taken. At Erlangen he received much kindness at the hands of the Margravine of Brandenburg-Baireuth, "a woman of great merit, amiable disposition, and possessing great knowledge of the world," who wrote to Lady Hester about her brother in the highest terms of approval, and congratulated her on having saved "a young plant from the *infernal* principles of Jacobinism."

When Mahon entered the university, Lady Hester's anxieties did not altogether cease. She was afraid lest

James and Charles should be "flogged to death to make them confess what they were really ignorant of," namely, the manner in which Mahon had fled from England. Lady Hester had pulled strings in high places, but she congratulated herself that her share in Mahon's escape was not known. Writing to Lord Glastonbury she pointed out to him how essential it was that the place of Mahon's abode and the names of his deliverers should be kept secret.

A letter written by her about this date appears to bear on the subject, but it is uncertain whether "Bob" therein mentioned refers to the "charming, incomparable Mahon," under a disguise, or to some other young man whom she wished to befriend. The style of the letter, which is in a bright vein and full of pent-up energy, is calculated to mystify anyone but the recipient for whom it was intended. Lady Hester loved mystery all her life. It is addressed to William Scott, Esq., at Sergeant's Inn, marked *Private*, and written on a Saturday, month and year unknown. The watermark of the paper is 1801. If the document referred to Lord Mahon's departure from England, it must have been penned in January or early in February of that year, because the manner of his escape was not then definitely decided on. She hoped that "Bob's business" would soon be settled, for she had just received a note from a certain person, whom she had proposed that Scott should meet at dinner, expressing great regret that the application should have been neglected through hurry. A personage to whom she mysteriously referred as "The R.P." had called on her the moment he returned from Windsor. He had told her he would not have left town had he not felt sure that the thing was *certain*. He had talked about "making up with a certain person."

Lady Hester assured Mr. Scott that he was not to be

astonished if he saw her "march in some day." She quite intended to do it. She wished to get rid of her exalted visitor so much (as she had other people to see and feared a despatch for July [?] would be too late as the messenger was about to set off) that she could not or would not discuss the matter with him. The R.P. had described her friend, Mr. Scott, as a d—— sharp little fellow. No doubt she thought the expression would give Scott pleasure. He had also inquired whether it was Scott who had called with the last letter she had written about the bill. This made Lady Hester think that Scott ought to call, not to ask for the R.P. if he disliked doing so, but that he might desire his "name to be wrote down." She thought it would be a compliment, and the R.P. liked compliments.

She hoped Scott would be able to dine with her the following week. She could not fix a day because a dinner at Blackheath was "like a drawn sword over her head," and the date of it had not been announced. She probably referred to a dinner arranged by Princess Caroline, who, in 1801, was living at Montague House, Blackheath.

Lady Hester warned Scott not to delay his visit to the Duke, and informed him that he would be likely to meet the Duke at the Grand Ship (?) experiment in K. Gardens. She thought this would give him the opportunity of thanking him in person for the trouble he had taken.

She added that the First Lord of the Admiralty had said in a note, "Something I insist upon shall be done, possible or impossible. My commands must be obeyed." She intended to approach him about "Bob" if her other plans failed, but she was determined there should be no chance of that.

In May, 1801, Mahon's whereabouts were still unknown to many of his friends. On the 17th the Earl of Haddington wrote to Lady Hester saying he had had a visitor who had

26 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

been indiscreet in giving information as to the whereabouts of the missing heir. But Lady Hester had taken as many precautions as possible, and did not need to be warned of danger. Not until she was secure in the knowledge that Mahon was profiting by his new environment did she rest from her labours.

CHAPTER V

PITT, THE "GREAT MAN" (1801-1802)

THERE had been repeated rumours at this time that Lady Hester was about to be married, and her friend, Mr. Francis James Jackson, the young diplomatist who had helped her in the matter of her brother's escape, wrote to ask whether he might offer his congratulations on the approaching event. Report said she was betrothed to Mr. Methuen, Jr., of Corsham.*

In reply Lady Hester jokingly wrote: "I have been *going* to be *married* fifty times in my life; said to have been married half as often, and run away with once. But provided I have my own way, the world may have theirs and welcome"—a very characteristic speech, and one she dared to live up to.

She was a flirt, and seemed by no means in a hurry to marry and settle down. The idol upon whom she bestowed the largest share of her affections was her uncle, William Pitt. She called him her guardian angel, the great man, and other pet names. At this time he filled her horizon. On April 19th, 1801, she wrote to Jackson:

"Oh, delightful, charming! This evening's post has not only brought me your letter, but a volume from Mr. Pitt.†

* The well-known Wiltshire family. Probably Paul Methuen, eldest son of Paul Cobb Methuen, born June 21st, 1779, created Baron Methuen of Corsham, July 13th, 1838. Married, 1810, Jane Dorothea, daughter of Sir Henry Paulet St. John Mildmay, of Dogmersfield Park, Hants.

† Pitt had resigned office on March 14th.

"He appears to be so happy and well, for he says, what with the luxury of living with his friends, and the improvement of public affairs, his only apprehension will be of growing too fat for horseman's weight, at least as a companion in my rides."*

Pitt had promised her to do all he could for Mahon. He also obtained commissions in the Army and the Navy for the younger Stanhopes. Lady Hester bubbled over with gratitude. "How instinct taught me to love this 'Great Man,'" she wrote, "and if I had not kept sight of him at a *distance*, what would have become of us all?" She intended to see a good deal of him during the summer. Later in the year she was planning to go abroad with her friends, Mr. and Mrs. Egerton, who proposed travelling through Germany and Switzerland, and wintering in Italy. It was arranged that Lord Mahon should join them for part of the journey.

Writing to Earl Haddington from Lyme Regis, Dorset, on September 13th, 1801, Lady Hester referred to a visit which Lord Binning intended to pay her brother at Erlangen. She sent a complimentary message about Lord Binning to Lady Haddington as "most mammas like to hear their sons' praises."

She also conveyed a kind message to Lord Haddington from Mr. Pitt, and, after a few items of news about mutual acquaintances, she asked him to let her know what he had heard about "G. M. S.," otherwise Lady Stanhope,† her grandmother, and Lord Haddington's aunt, because, she concluded, "I must ever feel a lively interest in everything which relates to that excellent tho' misguided woman."

In the autumn of 1802 Lady Hester paid a farewell visit to Mr. Pitt at Walmer.

* "Miscellanies," pp. 64-5, collected and edited by Earl Stanhope. Second Series. 1872. (By kind permission of Mr. John Murray.)

† Grisel, wife of Philip, second Earl Stanhope, and sister of Thomas, seventh Earl of Haddington. She died in 1811.

"Hester arrived here yesterday on her way to join her travelling friends at Dover," wrote Pitt to Mrs. Stapleton, from Walmer, on September 17th. "I hope to enjoy the pleasure of her society, at all events, till Monday, and perhaps, if the winds are contrary, some days longer." *

Four days afterwards Lady Hester wrote to Mr. Jackson that she had found the statesman in bad health :

"Sept. 21, 1802. Walmer Castle.

"Even the illness of my dear uncle has not made me quite forget the request you made me ; but the first thing I must say is, that, thank God, he is quite recovered ; and if he was to be ill, perhaps my having the opportunity of showing him I have talents as a nurse is better than his having had to nurse himself. I am enchanted with everything here. But I leave them all on Thursday.†

On October 23rd the Egertons, accompanied by Lady Hester, reached Turin. Lady Hester particularly enjoyed the crossing of Mont Cenis on mule-back. After having her head turned from listening to flattering speeches made by many young men at Walmer, she had sobered down again, and was ready to play tutor to Mahon, whom she found much improved in learning and well versed in English politics.

One of her early letters from abroad was to Mr. Jackson. In another, written from Turin on October 27th, 1802, she apologised to Lord Haddington for leaving England without congratulating him and Lady Haddington upon their son's approaching marriage. The fact was that while she had stayed at Walmer during her uncle's illness, she had been unable to keep up her correspondence. She also sent Lord

* "*Life of Pitt*," by Earl Stanhope, 1861-2, vol. iii., pp. 393-4.

† "*Stanhope Miscellanies*," pp. 65-6. Second Series. 1872. (By kind permission of Mr. John Murray.)

30 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

Mahon's congratulations to the bridegroom. Her brother had joined the travelling party at Lyons, having left Germany for good.

He accompanied his sister to Italy, and embarked there for Gibraltar to visit his brother Charles, and was then returning to England. "I suppose you know," she added, "that our guardian angel has appointed him lieutenant-governor of Dover Castle, which is a very pleasant thing considering *who* is his neighbour. . . ."

Lady Hester reached England in the summer of 1803, a few months after the death of her grandmother, Lady Chatham, on April 3rd. She could not live at Chevening on account of her estrangement from Earl Stanhope. Harriet Eliot had been adopted by her uncle, Lord Chatham, and was remaining at Burton Pynsent. There was no place there for another niece, and Lady Hester turned in hope to Pitt.*

She was not disappointed. He welcomed her into his household with open arms, and thenceforth she sat at the head of his table and assisted him in doing the honours.

"How amiable it is of Pitt to take compassion on poor Lady Hester Stanhope, and that in a way which must break in upon his habits of life. He is as good as he is great," wrote Lord Mulgrave to the Hon. Major-General Phipps, from York on September 9th, 1803. †

It was true that Pitt was confirmed in so-called old bachelor habits, and may have had misgivings about the step.

* By that time Pitt had already interested himself on behalf of Lord Mahon and his brothers. He wrote to Mahon on March 10th, 1803, mentioning a strange letter from Lord Stanhope, and advising him to take no notice of it. He commended Mahon's generosity to his brothers James and Charles. "The sum you propose to allot to each will, I hope, be quite adequate, and is one which is very liberal and generous in you to spare."—"Stanhope Miscellanies," p. 67, 1872. Second Series.

† "Memoirs of the Political and Literary Life of Robert Plumer Ward," by Hon. Edmund Phipps. 1850. Vol. i., p. 143.

Lady Hester's Wit

31

"He must have felt that he might be sacrificing or greatly hazarding his future comfort for the sake of a niece, whom, up to that time, he had very seldom seen," wrote Earl Stanhope.* "But I rejoice to think that his kind act—as by a propitious order of things is often the case with such acts—brought after it its own reward. Lady Hester quickly formed for him a strong and devoted attachment, which she extended to his memory so long as her own life endured. On his part he came to regard her with almost a father's affection.

"In her latter years Lady Hester Stanhope has been frequently described. Travellers in Palestine all sought to visit the recluse of Mount Lebanon. Many failed in gaining access to the 'castled crag' where she dwelt alone, and have indulged their spleen in bitter comments on one whom they never saw. Others who succeeded have portrayed, and perhaps, as I may deem, exaggerated, the violence of her temper and the eccentricity of her opinions. But not such was the Hester Stanhope who, at the age of twenty-seven, became the inmate of her uncle's house. With considerable personal attractions, the Lady Hester of 1803 combined a lively flow of conversation and an in-born quickness of discernment. Her wit was certainly even then far too satirical and too little under control. She made even then many enemies, but she also made many friends. Mr. Pitt was on some occasions much discomposed by her sprightly sallies, which did not always spare his own Cabinet colleagues. But on the whole her young presence proved to be, as it were, a light in his dwelling. It gave it that charm which only a female presence can impart. It tended, as I believe, far more than his return to power, to cheer and brighten his few—too few—remaining years.

"I have said that her wit was too unrestrained, and that it did not always spare Mr. Pitt's most intimate friends. Of this I will give only one instance, which I heard from Mr. Pitt's last surviving private secretary.† It refers to the Lord Mulgrave, from one of whose letters I just now cited a sentence. Sixteen months from the date of that letter Lord Mulgrave was named

* "Life of Pitt," by Earl Stanhope, 1861-2, vol. iv., p. 96.

† W. D. Adams.

by Mr. Pitt Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, a post which, as some persons thought, would overtask his mental powers. Shortly afterwards Lord Mulgrave came one morning to breakfast with Mr. Pitt, and desiring to eat an egg, could find on the table only a broken egg-spoon.

“‘How can Pitt have such a spoon as this?’ he asked Lady Hester. ‘Don’t you know,’ answered the lively lady; ‘have you not yet discovered that Mr. Pitt sometimes uses very slight and weak instruments to effect his ends?’”*

Whatever Pitt’s friends may have thought of this fearsome young woman he himself laughed at her follies and forgave them. She was young, attractive, and feminine. He could condone many of her faults, even her feline playfulness. Lady Hester was in her element. Surrounded by men who flattered her for her good looks, her bright sallies, or her supposed influence with the statesman, she was superlatively happy.

“You can easily figure to yourself that I have not much time to spare from the charming society I now live in,” she wrote from Walmer Castle in October, 1803, to Jackson, who was then at Berlin. “To express the kindness with which Mr. Pitt welcomed my return, and proposed my living with him, would be impossible. One would really suppose that all obligation had been on his side! Here, then, am I, happy to a degree, exactly in the sort of society I most like. There are generally three or four men staying in the house; we dine nine or ten almost every other day.”†

* Lord Normanby declared that no such pert retort was addressed to his father. The story came through Mr. Adams, who was not present at the breakfast.—“Life of Pitt,” by Earl Stanhope, 1861-2, vol. iv., p. 87.

† “Stanhope Miscellanies,” p. 68. Second Series. 1872. (By kind permission of Mr. John Murray.)



THE RT. HON. WILLIAM PITT (1759-1806).
(Lady Hester's Uncle.)

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CHAPTER VI

VOLUNTEERING AT WALMER (1803-4)

WAR had been declared in the spring of 1803, and fear of a French invasion had given a stimulus to volunteering all over the country. Pitt, whilst at Walmer, organised a body of Cinque Port volunteers, and took an active part in their drill and efficiency. These military occupations delighted Lady Hester, who, it was said, during Pitt's absence in London "appears to have taken charge" of the corps.* She certainly took an active part in most of the manoeuvres, and often rode home in heavy showers of rain. "I have been so drenched," she said, "that as I stood, my boots made two spouting fountains above my knees."†

"Mr. Pitt absolutely goes through the fatigue of a drill-sergeant," she wrote to Jackson in October, 1803. "It is parade after parade, at fifteen or twenty miles' distance from each other. I often attend him, and it is quite as much, I can assure you, as I am equal to, although I am remarkably well just now. The hard riding I do not mind, but to remain almost still so many hours on horseback is an incomparable bore, and requires more patience than you can easily imagine. However, I suppose few regiments for the time were ever so forward; therefore the trouble is nothing; and if Mr. Pitt does not overdo it and injure his health, every other consideration becomes trifling. You know me too well not to be aware of the anxiety I am under upon this account, and the extreme care I take, or rather endeavour

* "George Canning and His Friends," vol. i., p. 132, by Joceline Bagot. (Murray, 1909.)

† "Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 75.

34 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

to take, of this blessing (so essential to him in his present active line of conduct, and therefore invaluable to his country) is kindly rewarded by his minding me more than any other person, and allowing me to speak to him upon the subject of his health, which is always an unpleasant one, and one he particularly dislikes. There is no use in flattering a man who is not ill from fancy and makes but too light of his complaints. Therefore I pursue quite a different plan, and I am happy to be able to tell you sincerely I see nothing at all alarming about him. He had a cough when I first came to England, but it has nearly or quite left him; he is thin, yet certainly strong, and his spirits are excellent.

* * * * *

"Mr. Pitt is determined to remain acting Colonel when his regiment is called into the field. Some persons blame this determination, but I do not; he has always hitherto acted up to his character: why should he, then, in this instance prove deficient? I should not be the least surprised any night to hear of the French attempting to land; indeed, I expect it; but I feel equally certain that those who do succeed in this will neither proceed nor return." *

Pitt not only organised a regiment, but he equipped a fleet of thirty-five luggers, fitted out with twelve or eighteen-pounders, and manned by daring boatmen. On September 15th, 1803, this fleet was reviewed.

"At a given signal the whole five-and-thirty boats launched simultaneously from the beach, and came to an anchor with all speed in their appointed order about a cable's length from shore, the line extending from abreast the White Bulwark to some distance beyond Walmer Castle. Thus they waited till noon, when, according to appointment, the Lord Warden's flag on Walmer Castle was to be saluted; then with commendable punctuality the southernmost boat fired the first gun, and the salute was taken up by every lugger in succession till the round

* "*Stanhope Miscellanies*," pp. 69-70. Second Series. 1872. (By kind permission of Mr. John Murray.)

of thunder had been completed. This scene was witnessed from the ramparts by Mr. Pitt, Lord Mahon, Lady Hester Stanhope, and others, after which, with very little loss of time, the whole party embarked in a large lugger, steered by Thomas Canney, Warden of the Pilot, to inspect the line of boats." *

Lady Hester described the manœuvres at sea to the Earl of Haddington. She wrote from Walmer Castle on November 15th, 1803, to thank him for his last letter to her. She was overwhelmed, she told him, by the kindness which her uncle had shown to her and the other members of her family since they had been at Walmer. Lord Mahon had settled near Dover, and was to be married in a week's time. Lady Hester approved of his bride, Catherine Lucy Smith, who was the fourth daughter of Robert Smith, first Baron Carrington. She thought Mahon could not have made a better choice. She described the mother of her future sister-in-law as "a sweet, amiable and domestic woman," and the father as an "excellent, friendly man." She looked upon the connection as a desirable one upon the whole.

Having exhausted family history, she went on to write of the news concerning the French. A few days previously, Pitt, Lord Camden, Charles Stanhope, and herself had taken a Deal boat and rowed alongside one of the French gunboats. The boat was about 70 feet long, she said, and had two large guns on board, thirty soldiers and four sailors. She drew about 4 feet of water. Lady Hester thought her "an ill-contrived thing, and so little above the water that had she as many men on board as she could really carry, a moderate storm would wash them overboard." Having compared the soliders to some of the "rascally regiments" she had seen, she concluded that these particular Frenchmen were picked men. They were well clothed and supplied with everything, including an immense cask of brandy,

* "Records of Walmer," by Rev. Charles R. S. Elvin, 1890, p. 249.

and a sufficient quantity of provisions. They appeared neither insulted nor mortified at being stared at or talked to, nor did they sham high spirits. They expected that they would soon be retaken, for they thought "it would be all over in two months' time." Frenchmanlike, some of them were dressing their hair, and attending in other ways to the decoration of their persons, either by arranging a prodigious black stock over their chins, or by giving a knowing air to their large cocked hats, which were adorned with the national cockade. The cockade, which Lady Hester regarded as a badge of rascality, nevertheless led her into reflections of an unpleasant nature on the power it represented. She had great faith in the abilities of the French, and though wise people declared they would never land in England, her opinion was very different. She had seen impassable mountains over which they had marched armies, and felt certain that not only would they attempt anything, however rash, but that they would be quite likely to succeed in it.

General Dundas, who had reviewed Mr. Pitt's first battalion of volunteers, had expressed his pleasure and surprise at its state of discipline.

Lady Hester went to all the reviews, which were at this time graced by the presence of Lord and Lady Chatham, who were staying at Walmer. "Nobody ever contrived to appear so much of a prince as he does," she wrote of the head of Pitt's house, "his led horses, his carriages, his dress, his star and garter, he shows off in his *quiet way*, with wonderful effect." She admired her uncle immensely when he was surrounded by a tribe of military attendants.

The pageantry of reviews, however, soon gave place to more serious military tactics.

At the beginning of 1804 excitement grew intense.

"We are in almost daily expectation of the arrival of the French," wrote Lady Hester to Jackson on January 14th, "and Mr. Pitt's regiment is now nearly perfect enough to receive them. We have the famous 15th Light Dragoons in our barracks; also the Northampton and Berkshire Militia.* The first and last of these regiments I command, and have an orderly Dragoon whenever I please from the former and the band of the latter. I never saw any Militia Regiment so well officered, or composed of such pleasant men, as the Berkshire. A Northamptonshire squire is not pleasant in his own country, and does not improve with transplanting, but the regiment is a fine body of men. I am at this moment alone with my little brother James, who has left the Navy for the Army; he is too clever for a sailor—too refined, I mean.† I do not regret the change, as higher powers approve it. He is now in the Guards, and is to join, I believe, soon—the time will be decided when Mr. Pitt returns. I expect him in a few days. He was perfectly well when he left me; his most intimate friends say they do not remember him as well since the year 'ninety-seven. Nothing can please me better than the pleasant footing I am upon with all those most attached to him, and the satisfaction it appears to give him when they show me civility. . . . Oh, such miserable things as the French gunboats! We took a vessel the other day loaded with gin—to keep up their spirits, I suppose: another with abominable bread and a vast quantity of peas and beans, which

* Lady Hester said to Dr. Meryon in after years: "Doctor, I once changed the dress of a whole regiment—the Berkshire Militia. Somebody asked me, before a great many officers, what I thought of them, and I said they looked like so many tinned harlequins. One day, soon after, I was riding through Walmer village, when who should pop out upon me but the colonel, dressed in entirely new regimentals, with different facings, and more like a regiment of the line. 'Pray, pardon me, Lady Hester'—so I stopped, as he addressed me—'pray, pardon me,' said the colonel, 'but I wish to know if you approve of our new uniform.' Of course I made him turn about, till I inspected him round and round—pointed with my whip, as I sat on horseback, first here and then there—told him the waist was too short, and wanted half a button more—the collar was a little too high—and so on; and, in a short time, the whole regiment turned out with new clothes."—"Memoirs," vol. ii., pp. 77-8.

† Pitt wrote to Lord Mahon from Walmer Castle on November 22nd, 1803: "Hester has already written to James desiring him to come to us as soon as he can obtain leave, which I hope will be immediately."—"Stanhope Miscellanies," p. 71. 1872.

the soldiers eat. One of the boats had an extremely large chest of medicine, probably for half their flotilla. Their guns are ill-mounted, and cannot be used with the same advantage as ours, but are fine pieces of ordnance. Buonaparte was said to be at Boulogne a few days ago; our officers patrolled all night with the men, which was pleasant. I have my orders how to act in case of real alarm in Mr. Pitt's absence, and also a promise from him never to be further from the army than a two hours' ride. This is all I wish. I should break my heart to be drove up the country like a sheep when everything I most love was in danger." *

In spite of Lady Hester's assertion that the volunteer regiment was nearly perfect, recruiting still went on, and it was owing to Pitt's offer of a majority to Captain Nassau Sutton that Lady Hester became thoroughly well acquainted with that gentleman, who afterwards accompanied her and her brother when they left England in 1810. A letter from Pitt written from Walmer Castle on January 15th, 1804, to Lieut.-Colonel Ditton, refers to the appointment. Pitt said he was very happy to hear from Lady Hester that Ditton had reason to believe Captain Sutton of the Nottingham Militia would be willing to receive a commission as Field Officer in the 2nd Battalion of the Volunteers. His assistance would, he thought, be very valuable, and he would have particular pleasure in receiving it, on every account. He begged Ditton to have the goodness to assure Sutton of this, and to let him know that when he obtained his permission he would immediately send a recommendation to the Secretary of State for his appointment as Major. He thought it would be best, if Ditton saw no objection to it, that he should at the same time receive the appointment of 2nd Lieut.-Colonel, as had been done in the case of Colonel Shee in the 1st Battalion. He expressed his regret to hear

* "*Stanhope Miscellanies*," pp. 72-3. Second Series. 1872. (By kind permission of Mr. John Murray.)

that Ditton had been unwell. If he were sufficiently recovered to go out without inconvenience, Pitt hoped to see him on the following day or the first day afterwards on which it suited him to spend a night or two at Walmer. In a postscript he invited Captain Sutton to accompany Ditton, saying how happy it would make him to see him if he were at liberty.

Accordingly Captain Sutton became a Major in the Cinque Port Volunteers, and Pitt acknowledged his acceptance of the appointment in a letter dated from 14 York Place, on February 18th, 1804. Having received his obliging letter that morning, he wrote, he learned with great satisfaction that Sutton accepted the majority. He promised to send in a recommendation to the Secretary of State immediately, but he feared the unfortunate circumstance of the King's indisposition might for a time prevent the commission being completed. For six weeks Pitt and Lady Hester remained in town, and on March 30th the latter wrote a note* from York Place at her uncle's request. The correspondent's name did not appear upon the letter, but it was probably addressed to Lieut.-Colonel Ditton, and informed him that Mr. Pitt desired her to say they would both be at Walmer on the following day, and hoped to see him and Mr. Sutton to dinner as soon as they pleased. At all events she asked him to let Pitt know on Sunday morning which were his days of exercise. If Monday and Tuesday were the days as usual, Pitt would meet them both and they could arrange to return with him. Lady Hester added that she had seen little of her correspondent's brother, as, she explained archly, "he is making love to Miss Drummond, but says he is coming to see you ere long."

* Reproduced in reduced facsimile at p. 80.

CHAPTER VII

PITT'S LAST YEARS (1804-6)

ON May 10th Pitt re-entered office as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, a step which necessitated frequent residence in town. In order to have the benefit of country air while attending to official duties, he rented a house on Putney Heath. Of this interior an intimate glimpse is given by William Napier, who joined the family gathering, then consisting of Pitt, Lady Hester, and Charles and James Stanhope.

"In 1804," he wrote, "being then near nineteen, and having been a brother officer of Charles Stanhope, Mr. Pitt's nephew, I was, through him, invited to pass some time at Putney in Mr. Pitt's house. Arriving rather late, the great man was at dinner when I entered the room; he immediately rose, and, giving me both hands, welcomed me with such a gentle, good nature, that I instantly felt—not at ease, for I was not at that time much troubled with what is called *mauvaise honte*, but—that I had a friend before me with whom I might instantly become familiar to any extent within the bounds of good breeding. Lady Hester Stanhope also treated me with the most winning kindness. All this produced a strange sensation; for I came determined to hold fast by my patriotism, though in presence of a wicked minister, however polite or condescending he might be found. Brought up amidst Whigs, and used to hear Mr. Pitt abused with all the virulence of Whigs, I looked upon him as an enemy of all good government; and my father, though not a Whig, had always condemned his war with France as an iniquitous and pernicious measure. Thus primed with fierce recollections and patriotic

resolves, I endeavoured to sustain my mind's hatred against the Minister, but in vain; all feelings sunk, except those of surprise and gratification, at finding such a gentle, good-natured, agreeable and entertaining companion. I say companion deliberately, and with a right, as will be seen from what follows. Lady Hester, moreover, was very attractive; so rapid and decided was her conversation, so full of humour and keen observation, and withal so friendly and instructive, that it was quite impossible not to fall at once into her direction and become her slave, whether for laughter or seriousness. She was not certainly beautiful, but her tall, commanding figure, her large, dark eyes, and variety of expression, changing as rapidly as her conversation, and equally vehement, kept the mind in continual admiration. She had not much respect for the political coadjutors of Mr. Pitt. Lord Castlereagh she always called 'His monotonous lordship,' and Lord Liverpool was a constant theme of ridicule. Thus, speaking of a design at that time entertained of conferring military decorations, she told me that it had been agreed to by Mr. Pitt, but was stopped by the meddling of Lord Liverpool, who insisted on being a co-partner with her in choosing the colour and texture of the ribbons. That, she said, she thought, as a young woman, she might have been allowed to settle; but Lord Liverpool, being an old woman, was jealous, and sent her four thousand yards—she positively affirmed that—four thousand yards of different ribbons at the expense of the public, which he proposed to examine in conjunction with her for the purpose of fixing on the most suitable. She sent them back with her compliments, saying she declined the concert, and could see no use whatever for the ribbons except to make braces for supporting his lordship's culottes, which she had observed were always weighed down by the heavy official papers in his pockets.* This stopped all further progress in the plan of military decorations.

* Lady Hester's version of this story is told in the "Memoirs," vol. i., p. 218. Lord Liverpool brought the ribbons, observing, with much complacency, "I have endeavoured to combine such colours as will flatter the national vanity. Here is red for the English flag, blue for liberty, and white to denote the purity of motive." Everyone applauded, and Lady Hester said, "I think the colours charming. I know exactly how they will look, as I have seen them very often." "Seen them! Where?" asked Lord Liverpool. "Why, in the French soldiers' cockades," she replied. He had overlooked the tri-coloured flag.

"Of Sir John Moore she always spoke with admiration, and said Mr. Pitt had a like admiration for him; that he never received even a common note from him at Deal without showing it to his company and pointing out the grace and felicity of the expressions.

"Mr. Pitt used to come home to dinner rather exhausted, and seemed to require wine, port, of which he generally drank a bottle, or nearly so, in a rapid succession of glasses; but when he had recovered his strength from this stimulant he ceased to drink. His conversation with us was always gay, good-natured, and humorous, telling all about the Colonel of the — Regiment, General —, who was certainly a very comical character, of which two of Mr. Pitt's stories will give ample proof. The first was that, in the midst of the fears of a French invasion, General — sent an extraordinary express with a parcel supposed to contain important news, but which turned out to be the nightcap of a member of the Government, who had left it behind when on a visit to the General. The second was also an express story, being a dispatch from —, when he commanded on the South coast, telling Mr. Pitt that '*two* French ships were actually then landing troops in *three* places.'

"Mr. Pitt liked practical fun, and used to riot in it with Lady Hester, Charles and James Stanhope, and myself; and one instance is worth noticing. We were resolved to blacken his face with burnt cork, which he most strenuously resisted, but at the beginning of the fray a servant announced that Lords Castlereagh and Liverpool desired to see him on business. 'Let them wait in the other room,' was the answer; and the great minister instantly turned to the battle, catching up a cushion and belabouring us with it in glorious fun. We were, however, too many and strong for him, and after at least a ten minutes' fight, got him down and were actually daubing his face, when, with a look of pretended confidence in his prowess, he said, 'Stop, this will do; I could easily beat you all, but we must not keep those grandees waiting any longer.' His defeat was, however, palpable, and we were obliged to get a towel and a basin of water to wash him clean before he could receive the grandees. Being thus put in order, the basin was hid behind the sofa, and the two lords were ushered in. Then a new phase of Mr. Pitt's

manner appeared, to my great surprise and admiration. Lord Liverpool's look and manner are well known—melancholy, bending, nervous. Lord Castlereagh I had known from my childhood, had often been engaged with him in athletic sports, pitching the stone or bar, and looked upon him, as what indeed he was, a model of quiet grace and strength combined. What was my surprise to see both him and Lord Liverpool bending like spaniels on approaching the man we had just been maltreating with such successful insolence of fun! But instantly Mr. Pitt's change of manner and look entirely fixed my attention. His tall, ungainly, bony figure seemed to grow to the ceiling, his head was thrown back, his eyes fixed immovably in one position, as if reading the heavens, and totally regardless of the bending figures near him. For some time they spoke; he made now and then some short observation, and finally, with an abrupt, stiff inclination of the body, but without casting his eyes down, dismissed them. Then, turning to us with a laugh, caught up his cushions and renewed our fight."*

Childish games, much as she loved them, did not fill Lady Hester's thoughts. At twenty-eight she was still unmarried. During her life with Pitt she met many eligible men. Her days were a round of excitement, one long social triumph, and as yet the right moment and the right man had not arrived. She was haughty; she wanted to choose him herself. She realised that it would not be easy to improve on her environment. In spite of the whirl about her, which was enough to turn the head of the strongest of women, she had time to calculate. Her eyes were quick to see faults, and her tongue ready to speak scornful words. She associated with the highest, and none but the highest was good enough to mate with.

"You may imagine," she said later to Dr. Meryon, "the numbers and numbers of people I met in society whilst I lived

* "Life of General Sir William Napier, 1864, vol. i., p. 28 *et seq.* (By kind permission of Mr. John Murray.)

with Mr. Pitt, almost all of whom were dying to make my acquaintance, and of whom I necessarily could know little or nothing. Indeed, to the greater part of those who were introduced to me, if they saw me afterwards, when they bowed I might return the salutation, smile a little, and pass on, for I had not time to do more—a person's life would not be long enough. Well, I recollect it was at a party where Charles X. was present—I think it was at Lord Harrington's—that somebody said to me, 'Mr. — wants to know you so much! Why won't you let him be introduced to you?' 'Because I don't like people whose face is all oily, like a soap-ball,' answered I. Now, doctor, upon my word, I no more knew he had made his fortune in oil than I do what was the colour of the paper in your saloon at Nice; and when his friend said, 'You are too bad, Lady Hester,' I did not understand what he meant.

"I have had an instinct all my life, that never deceived me, about people who were thoroughbred or not; I knew them at once. . . .

"As I passed the card-table that evening where the Comte d'Artois was playing, he put down his cards to talk to me a little so polite, so well-bred—poor man! And there were the other three old dowagers who were playing with him abusing him in English, which he understood very well, because he had stopped the game. After he resumed I was leaning over the back of a chair facing him, reflecting in one of my thoughtful moments on the uncertainty of human greatness in the picture I had then before me, when I gave one of those deep sighs which you have heard me do sometimes, something between a sigh and a grunt, and so startled the French King that he literally threw down his cards to stare at me. I remained perfectly motionless, pretending not to observe his action; and, as he still continued to gaze at me, some of the lookers-on construed it into a sort of admiration on his part. This enraged Lady P., and her rage was increased when, at every knock at the door, I turned my head to see who was coming, and he turned his head too. For I was expecting the royalties, and so was he; but she did not know this, and she took it into her head that the Prince and I had some understanding between us.

"I never thought any more of the matter; but in the course

Her Good Judgment

45

of the evening somebody brought Lady P. to me, and introduced her. 'I have longed,' said Lady P., 'for some time to make your acquaintance; I don't know how it is that we have never met. It would give me great pleasure if I sometimes saw you at my parties, and so on.' The next day I had a visit from Lady P., and the day after that came her card, and then an invitation, and day after day there was nothing but Lady P. So, at last, not knowing what it meant, I said to an acquaintance, 'What is the reason that Lady P. is always coming after me?' 'What! don't you know?' she replied. 'The King of France is in love with you!' And this is the art, doctor, of all those mistresses. They watch and observe if their lovers are pleased with any young person, and then invite her home as a lure to keep alive the old attraction." *

Someone speaking of her to Pitt suggested she would soon marry, and concluded by saying, "I suppose she waits till she can get a man as clever as herself." "Then," answered Mr. Pitt, "she will never marry at all."

If she had allowed her heart to guide her it might have led her into indiscretion, but her head was strong enough to keep her from serious mistakes. She was sure of herself.

"There might be," she said, "some apparent levity in my manner, both as regarded affairs of the Cabinet and my own, but I always knew what I was doing. When Mr. Pitt was reproached for allowing me such unreserved liberty of action in State matters, and in affairs where his friends advised him to question me on the motives of my conduct, he always answered :

* "Memoirs," vol. ii., pp. 94-7.

† "In answer to your question about Lady Hester Stanhope," wrote Charlotte Williams Wynn to Baron Varnhagen von Ense on September 20th, 1845, "My father says that the idea she intends to convey, that Mr. Pitt talked much to her and took her advice, is utterly false. Someone said one day to Mr. Pitt, 'What will Lady Hester say to that?' He answered very quietly, 'Lady Hester and I have made a bargain together. We are each to give advice, on condition that neither ever takes it.'"—"Memorials of Charlotte Williams Wynn," 1877, p. 63. (Longmans.)

'I let her do as she pleases, for if she were resolved to cheat the devil she could do it.' And so I could, doctor; and that is the reason why thick-headed people, who could never dive into the motives of what I did, have often misinterpreted my conduct when it has proceeded from the purest intentions. And, in the same way, when some persons said to Lady Suffolk, 'Look at Lady Hester, talking and riding with Bouverie and the Prince's friends; she must mind what she is about,' Lady Suffolk remarked, 'There is nothing to fear in that quarter; she never will let anybody do a bit more than she intends: what she does is with *connoissance de cause*.' And she was right: nobody could ever accuse me of folly. Even those actions which might seem folly to a common observer were wisdom. Everything with me, through life, had been premeditatedly done." *

Nevertheless, in spite of her vaunted security, at the beginning of 1805 Lady Hester suffered from a disappointment in love. No premeditation on her part saved her from bestowing her affections in a quarter from which they were not returned. The *beau nom gravé dans son cœur* belonged to one of Jackson's fellow-diplomatists, Lord Granville Leveson-Gower, "who had been appointed to the Embassy at St. Petersburg." Lady Hester's affections pointed, like the compass, to the North, and she deplored her want of prudence in "admiring an object which fills more hearts than one."

Lord Granville Leveson-Gower was three years older than Lady Hester, and was the third son of the first Marquis of Stafford. His mother was Lady Hester's chaperon, and one of the few women she cared for. Gronow wrote that he was the beau-ideal of a high-bred English nobleman, tall above the average, with a figure full of symmetry and grace, with regular features and a countenance expressive of mildness and good nature, "one of those men who, once

* "Memoirs," vol. ii., pp. 29-30.

seen, leave an impression on the memory." * In Paris he was nicknamed "*le Wellington des joueurs*."

The affair affected her spirits and her health. She went to the country to recoup.

"Last spring and part of the summer I bore in the great world much more than my value for talents, looks, etc.," she wrote from Walmer Castle on February 3rd, 1805. "Everything was over-rated, and although I was perfectly aware of it at the time, then I own I enjoyed it. Now, if I could command it, it would be indifferent to me; but my looks are gone, as they always do in the absence of health, and I have been recommended to come into the country to regain them; and here I have been three weeks. . . . I am not dull, or rather not idle, as I have the charge of improvements here—plantations, farms, buildings, etc. The grave and gay Generals pay me all due respect and attention, and so would all the garrison [in Deal Barracks] if I would allow them; but as I did not come here to be gay, I dispense with their civility and society.

"When I left Mr. Pitt he was very well, and bearing all the fatigues of business most astonishingly. Poor dear Lord H.'s † illness fell very heavy upon him for a time. I hope you like *Lord Ha Ha Ha* as well as he is to be liked." ‡

A couple of months later Lady Hester wrote to Adams:

"I am pretty well, but I am not allowed to go out yet, which vexes me, as I wish to attend to a plantation Mr. Pitt knows

* "*Gronow's Reminiscences*," 1889, vol. i., p. 269. In 1800 Pitt appointed Lord Leveson-Gower Lord of the Treasury. On July 19th, 1804, he was sent to St. Petersburg, but returned to England in 1805. Canning was his intimate friend. He married, on December 24th, 1809, Lady Harriet Elizabeth Cavendish, only a few weeks before Lady Hester set sail from England. He was created Earl Granville in 1833 and died in 1846.

† Lord Harrowby, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

‡ From the "*Stanhope Miscellanies*" (Second Series, 1872), pp. 75-6, where the letter is described as being to W. D. Adams. The Duchess of Cleveland quotes it as to Jackson. (Given here by kind permission of Mr. John Murray.)

48 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

nothing of. Lord Guildford has left his place in this part of the world [Waldershare Park], and is cutting down trees, and making all the money he can of it. He has allowed me to take a great many shrubs (these he gives to me), and, as anything green in this part of the world is a treasure, I have been employing myself to cultivate a frightful barren bit of ground behind the Castle, as it may be years and years before such an offer of plants might again be made; and buy them you cannot, of a considerable size, at least; and little twigs make no show; and should Mr. Pitt come the end of the week, I should like the plantation to be finished." *

For weeks she occupied herself in improving the glen at Walmer, which the Rev. Charles R. S. Elvin describes as "a perfect marvel of beauty," thanks in the first place to Lady Hester Stanhope, who found here nothing but a chalk pit and "a frightful barren bit of ground." She told the story to Dr. Meryon thus: .

"I remember once what an improvement I made at Walmer, which arose from a conversation with some friends, in which Mr. Pitt agreed with them that Walmer was not certainly a beautiful residence, but that it only wanted trees to make it so. I was present, but did not seem to hear what was passing.

"Mr. Pitt soon after went to town. Mindful of what he had let drop, I immediately resolved to set about executing the improvements which he seemed to imply as wanting. I got (I know not how) all the regiments that were in quarters at Dover, and employed them in levelling, fetching turf, transplanting shrubs, flowers, etc.† As I possess, in some degree, the art of ingratiating myself where I want to do it, I would go out of an evening among the workmen, and say to one, 'You are a Warwickshire man; I know by your face' (although I had known it by his brogue). 'How much I esteem Lord Warwick; he is

* "Stanhope Miscellanies," p. 76. Second Series. 1872. (By kind permission of Mr. John Murray.)

† Compare with this the account of Lady Hester in after years superintending the digging operations at Acalon, on p. 196.



WATER CASTLE, KENT

From a lithograph of c. 1830

Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

Lord Warwick has left his place in this part of the country, and is cutting down trees, and selling them. He has allowed me to take what I like, and gives to me, and, as anything I like is a treasure, I have been employing my money to get a barren bit of ground behind the house, and years before such an offer of trees I could not have bought them, and buy them you cannot, of a kind that little twigs make no show; and, at the end of the week, I should like the

story of her success in improving the glen at Walmer, which the Rev. Charles R. S. Elvin describes as "a garden of beauty," thanks in the first place Lady Hester Stanhope, who found here nothing but a "dark pit and "a frightful barren bit of ground." She told the story to Dr. Mayon thus :

"I began to see what an improvement I made at Walmer, in the conversation with some friends, in which they told me that Walmer was not certainly a garden, but that it only wanted trees to make it so. I did not seem to hear what was passing. I was so busy with my own mind. Mindful of what he had said, I went to the garden. I set about executing the plan, and he seemed to imply as wanting. I got (I think) the rest of the trees were in quarters at Dover, and in the garden, digging turf, transplanting etc.† As I possess, in some degree, the art of managing myself where I want to do it, I would go out of my way to the workmen, and say to one, 'You are a Walmer man; I know by your face' (although I had known it before). 'How much I esteem Lord Warwick; he is

* See 'The Garden,' p. 76. Second Series. 1872. (By kind permission of Mr. John Lubbock.)

† Compare this to the account of Lady Hester in after years superintending the digging operations at Ascham, on p. 196.



WALMER CASTLE, KENT.
From a lithograph of c. 1820.

my best friend.—Were you in Holland, my good fellow?' to another. 'Yes, my lady; in the Blues.'—'A fine regiment; there is not a better soldier in the army than Colonel So-and-so.'—'He was my colonel, my lady.' Thus a few civil words, and occasionally a present, made the work go on rapidly, and it was finished before Mr. Pitt's return.

"When Mr. Pitt came down, he dismounted from his horse, and, ascending the staircase, saw through a window which commanded a view of the grounds the improvements that had been made. 'Dear me, Hester, why this is a miracle! I know 'tis you, so do not deny it. Well, I declare, it is quite admirable; I could not have done it half so well myself.' And, although it was just dinner-time, he would go out and examine it all over, and then was so profuse in his praises—which were the more delightful, because they applauded the correctness of my taste. Above all, he was charmed that I had not fallen into an error (which most persons would have done) of making what is called an English garden, but rather had kept to the old manner of avenues, alleys, and the like as being more adapted to an ancient castle. Such was the amiable politeness of Mr. Pitt." *

Probably Pitt was not so ignorant of what was going on as Lady Hester's remarks convey. Perhaps in later years she had forgotten that she wrote to him on January 24th, 1805:

"Burfield† went to Maidstone yesterday for the last lot of trees and shrubs, which he expects will be all planted in ten days, unless a frost prevents it. I had a conversation with him about what was likely to grow in the chalk-pit. I proposed a few evergreen oaks, which he says will answer there, but nowhere else about the place. We both agreed upon filling it with a variety of creepers, furze, broom, or about anything that will grow and make it look less barren." ‡

* "Memoirs," vol. ii., pp. 66-7.

† The gardener; he died at Deal in 1859.

‡ "Stanhope Miscellanies," p. 75. Second Series. 1872. (By kind permission of Mr. John Murray.)

50 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

By and by her heartache lessened, but it was soon to be replaced by anxiety from another cause. Her own health was not re-established before she was alarmed on her uncle's account.

On April 15th, 1804, she had written to Pitt's doctor, Sir Walter Farquhar :

"I hope soon to have the pleasure of seeing you, but in the meantime must just state to you what I think about Mr. Pitt's health, not omitting to say how very uneasy his constant cough has lately made me, which till within these last six days he would take no care of, exposing himself to these easterly winds late in the evening, attending his duty not as a soldier and colonel of a regiment, but more like a drill-sergeant.

"I have also to beg that you will most forcibly dwell upon all directions you think necessary to give him. Nobody is so like an angel when he is extremely ill, and few persons less tractable when a little ill; always urging it is nothing, and taking no care in the world of himself." *

She wrote several letters to Mr. Adams in the spring of 1805, informing him of her fears for Pitt's health and her interest in political matters.

Thursday (Walmer Castle, April, 1805).

"Pray be quite easy about me, for I assure you I am a vast deal better. . . . This nasty fever is vastly provoking, for had Mr. Pitt come here I would have returned with him, and at all events I meant to come up the end of next week, to go to the Installation [Knights of the Garter, April 23, 1805].

"I am so hurt about Lord M [elville] and all that has passed. What a charming speech Mr. Pitt made! I think I see him; and certainly *cet heureux et vaste regard, qui saisit à la fois toutes les faces et tous les rapports, embrasse tous les objets sans les confondre, et les tient tous à l'imagination*, ought to have

* "Stanhope Miscellanies," pp. 73-4. Second Series. 1872. (By kind permission of Mr. John Murray.)

Pitt's Last Illness

51

awed some rascals during the debate on Monday. Oh, that I had been Lord M [elville], that I might have gone upon my knees to Mr. Pitt not to have defended me!

"There was no end yesterday to the farmers and people who wanted to get a sight of the papers. Their joy about Lord Melville is whimsical enough; they say it proves that 'bad is the best of them,' and it will make Mr. Pitt 'shine'; that he is the only honest man amongst them, and the only public man with clean hands. 'Our Master, our Colonel here,' as they call him."

Sunday (Walmer Castle, 1805).

"I was frightened to a degree when the messenger arrived. I thought at first Mr. Pitt was ill, and, when I saw his handwriting, that he was out of office; but was delighted to find it was only papers he wanted. I hope he found what he wanted, but they are in great confusion. I wish you would ask him some day if he would like me to bring any more to town when I come, for at this moment perhaps it is difficult to say what are those he may want."

Wednesday (Walmer Castle, 1805).

"Some persons write me Mr. Pitt looks well, others that he does not; I feel a constant anxiety about his health, and fear that business without end must be too much for him or anyone else. It often, indeed, occurs to me that you are likely to suffer from so much confinement. Let me give you one piece of advice, which is, to attend to your meals as regularly as possible, even if you sit up or rise the earlier for it to get through business. I have often been told that half Mr. Pitt's complaints were originally brought on by fasting too long, and, indeed, only eating when he found it convenient, which ruined the tone of his stomach." *

Within a few months her anxiety turned to bitter grief. The story of Pitt's death is well known. Early in

* "Stanhope Miscellanies," pp. 77-8. Second Series. 1872. (By kind permission of Mr. John Murray.)

December, 1805, he was at Bath. There he received the news of Austerlitz, which deeply affected him. On January 9th he started for London, the journey taking three days. He reached Putney on the 12th, and as he entered his house his eye rested on a map of Europe. "Roll up that map; it will not be wanted these ten years,"* he said. According to Earl Stanhope,† the remark was made to Lady Hester. Her story, told later to Dr. Meryon, did not include this incident. It has been said that Pitt mounted the staircase with alacrity, and this she contradicted.

"When the carriage came to the door, he was announced," she said, "and I went out to the top of the stairs to receive him. The first thing I heard was a voice so changed that I said to myself, 'It is all over with him.' He was supported by the arms of two people, and had a stick, or two sticks, in his hands; and as he came up, panting for breath—ugh! ugh!—I retreated little by little, not to put him to the pain of making a bow to me, or of speaking—so much for his alacrity!"‡

On January 19th Pitt was pronounced to be in danger, and a few days later all hope of his recovery was abandoned. James Stanhope said that Hester applied for leave to see her uncle, but was refused.

"Taking, however, the opportunity of Sir Walter's being at dinner," he added, "she went into Mr. Pitt's room. Though even then wandering a little, he immediately recollected her, and with his usual angelic mildness wished her future happiness and gave her a most solemn blessing and affectionate farewell. On her leaving the room, I entered it, and for some time afterwards Mr. Pitt continued to speak of her, and several times repeated, 'Dear

* See "Pitt," by Lord Rosebery, 1891, p. 256. ("Twelve English Statesmen" Series.)

† "Life of Pitt," by Earl Stanhope, 1861-2, vol. iv., p. 369.

‡ "Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 79.

Death of Pitt

53

soul, I know she loves me! Where is Hester? Is Hester gone? ' ' *

On January 23rd, 1806, he died, his last thought for his country. Distressed with regard to the situation of his nieces, Pitt had expressed a wish that a pension might be settled upon them. "I am far from saying," he added, "that my public services have earned it, but I hope my wish may be complied with." †

Lady Hester was granted £1,200 per annum. Her grief at her uncle's death was so intense that she could not weep. "I never shed a tear," she remarked, "until one day Lord Melville came to see me; and the sight of his eyebrows, turned grey, and his changed face made me burst into tears. I felt much better for it after it was over." ‡

* "Life of Pitt," by Earl Stanhope, 1861-2, vol. iv., pp. 380-1.

† *Ibid.*, p. 385.

‡ "Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 79.

CHAPTER VIII

SIR JOHN MOORE (1807-8)

PITT'S death made a great change in Lady Hester Stanhope's prospects. Her chances of a brilliant future in political circles vanished like smoke. After being the courted and spoiled darling of society,* she was left homeless, unprotected, and with an income barely sufficient to support her in the manner to which she was accustomed. The opportunities she had had of making a good match had passed by; the first freshness of her youth had departed.

All her life she refused to sit for her portrait, and her appearance has to be pictured from descriptions and the more or less reliable sketches made of her in later years in Eastern dress. At twenty she certainly possessed many physical advantages. She was tall and of a commanding presence. (According to her own account, her complexion was like alabaster, and at five paces' distance the sharpest eye could not distinguish her pearl necklace from her skin; her lips were of a beautiful carnation. A dark blue shadow

* A note about Lady Hester appears in the *Lady's Magazine* for 1806 (vol. xxxvii., p. 30), the same number that contains an account of Pitt's death. "Ladies' Dresses on Her Majesty's Birthday," January, 1806: "Lady Hester Stanhope was, as usual, dressed with much taste and elegance, in black and green velvet ornamented with embossed gold, and studded with rubies, which had a most brilliant effect. Head-dress, feathers and diamonds." Queen Charlotte's birthday, which was on May 19th, was celebrated on January 18th. ("Diaries of Lord Colchester," 1861, vol. ii., p. 25.) Owing to Pitt's illness his friends in office wished the celebration festivities to be postponed. But Pitt decided otherwise, and at his desire Lady Hester went from Putney in order to be present.

under the eyes, and the blue veins traceable on the temples, heightened the brilliancy of her features. Nor were roses wanting in her cheeks, and fatigue could not impair the permanency of her good looks.* Her eyebrows were arched and fine, the eyes a sparkling blue, which darkened to black when she was excited. Her features lit up with every varying mood, and the contours of her face and neck were so perfect that Beau Brummell once remarked to her, "For God's sake do take off those earrings, and let us see what is beneath them." †

At thirty, however, disappointment and sorrow had marred the bloom of her perfection. She depended chiefly for her beauty on happiness, success and the right mood. She had bestowed her love on one who had given no response, and her warmest affections were buried in Pitt's grave. For consolation at this hour she turned to her two younger brothers, Charles and James, and determined to make a home for them.

With this end in view she took a house in Montagu Square, a step she was soon to regret. Probably her friends and relatives thought her still too young and flighty to live with her two soldier brothers and without a chaperon or lady companion. Her name had been coupled again and again with that of some man or other, and her flirtations had often been condemned. At the moment when she most needed friends to rally round her they stood aloof, probably because she was proud and spoke out too freely. ‡ She had long been estranged from her father, and she now accused Lord Mahon of ingratitude. She was not on good terms with Lord Chatham or Lord Grenville,

* See "Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 16.

† "Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 18.

‡ "Would you believe it?" she said to Meryon in after years. "All the time I kept house in Montague Square not one of these people, not one of my relatives, ever sent me a single thing to help me on."—"Memoirs," vol. iii., p. 193.

58 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

Her brother Charles, who was his aide-de-camp, went with him.

Moore's last letter to her was written barely two months before his death. It was dated November 23rd, 1808, from Salamanca :

"I have very little time to write," he said, "but I cannot help writing to you, in answer to your very kind letter of the 26th October, which reached me a few days ago.

"You will perhaps think me very saucy for doubting your information on such a point, but I, however, do doubt that Ministers at this moment mean to throw blame of any kind upon me. They have thrust me, from their want of information, into a most critical situation here, and I believe they will make no attack upon me until they see how I extricate myself. But, at any rate, I should take no steps in my defence until I saw the attack begun, and then my defence will be their and my correspondence. I should lay that before the public. My letters contain a plain narrative of all that passed, with my reasons for every step I took. I should publish that without comment, and leave everyone to draw his own conclusion. If ever I have the pleasure of seeing you again, and you have a curiosity to see them, I shall give you all the papers. They are in England. It would be impossible, if I wished it, for me to recollect particulars sufficient for a memorial at this distance of time. Believe me that I never stood on stronger ground than in the whole business of Sweden, and of this I believe Ministers are sufficiently convinced to let me alone upon it. I made my escape after mature deliberation; personally, I was little concerned, as I had no apprehension of anything disagreeable happening to myself, but I thought by escaping I should relieve Government from an unpleasant dilemma, as they could not well help demanding the release of an officer sent by them to command their troops. Had Mr. Pitt been Minister, I should have remained, knowing that he would have sent a squadron to Stockholm to demand me, and to demand satisfaction for the insult offered, in my person, to the country; but I had no such confidence in the new administration, and knowing they had not spirit to act as they should

do, in civility to them I made my escape. There was no dignity in my staying or going, but by escaping I gratified a feeling by showing a contempt of the authority which had attempted to detain me. You must not be angry with me for not following your advice: I am not the less sensible of the kindness which dictated it; but I am an odd, obstinate fellow who in things which regard myself alone am apt to follow my own opinion. I must, however, tell you that I am upon the best terms with those you say mean to attack me; nothing can exceed their politeness and consideration.

"I received some time ago your letter of the 24th October. I shall be very glad to receive James, if he wishes to come to me as an extra aide-de-camp, though I have already too many, and am obliged, or shall be, to take a young Fitzclarence. But I have a sincere regard for James, and, besides, can refuse you nothing, but to follow your advice. He must get the Commander-in-Chief's leave to come to Spain. He may then join me. He will, however, come too late; I shall already be beaten. I am within four marches of the French, with only a third of my force; and as the Spaniards have been dispersed in all quarters, my junction with the other two-thirds is very precarious; and when we all join, we shall be very inferior to the enemy. The Spanish Government is weak and imbecile, their armies have at no time been numerous, and the country is not armed, nor, as far as I can judge, enthusiastic. We have been completely deceived by the contemptible fellows chosen as correspondents to the enemies; and now the discovery comes a little too late. Charles is not yet arrived; his was one of the best regiments that left Lisbon, and was not intended to join us, if I in compassion to his melancholy countenance had not found a pretext. We are in a scrape; but I hope we shall have spirit to get out of it. You must, however, be prepared to hear very bad news.

"The troops are in as good spirits as if things were better; their appearance and good conduct surprise the grave Spaniards, who had never before seen any but their own or French soldiers.

"Farewell, my dear Lady Hester. If I extricate myself and those with me from our present difficulties, and if I can beat

60 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

the French, I shall return to you with satisfaction; but if not, it will be better that I should never quit Spain.

"I remain always,

"Very faithfully and sincerely yours,

"JOHN MOORE." *

His hope of returning to her was unfulfilled, but he heard before he died of his victory over the French at Corunna. His last words were of her. "Stanhope," he said to her brother James, "remember me to your sister"—and that was all.

The cruel blow she suffered was followed by another—the death of Charles Stanhope in the same battle. Truly there seemed little left to live for.

A bright spot in the darkness was the return of Jackson from Berlin. She had always been in sympathy with him. Early in March, 1809, he called on her at Montagu Square, and described his visit to his mother:

16 March, 1809.

"I drank tea with my friend Lady Hester Stanhope. Though she has been so much overcome by her grief, she still takes an eager and anxious part in what is going forward. She is particularly interested for the Duke of York,† and the proceedings and the expected decision of the House of Commons formed the chief topics of our conversation. . . . Nobody's thoughts seem to go beyond the confines of our own little island, and I have yet been able to get no information, or even opinion, upon foreign affairs. On that, or any other subject, Lady Hester knows as little as anybody; for she has absolutely quarrelled with Canning and is gone into opposition, so she is trying to learn all she can from other sources. She is waiting only to get rid of her house to retire into Wales, as she cannot afford to live in London."

* "Stanhope Miscellanies," pp. 61-4. First Series. 1863.

† Frederick Augustus, Duke of York, was forced to retire from his post of Commander-in-Chief on March 18th, 1809, questions concerning Mary Anne Clarke, his mistress, having been raised in the House of Commons on January 27th.



LT-GENERAL SIR JOHN MOORE, K.B. (1761-1809).

A Letter from Jackson

61

March 22nd.

"I left off writing to you yesterday to go to dinner at Lady Hester Stanhope's, where there was only her brother and a friend of his, who had also been an aide-de-camp of Sir J. Moore. We fought part of the campaign, both political and military, over again." *

* "The Bath Archives. A Further Selection from Diaries and Letters of Sir George Jackson, 1809-16," 1873, vol. i., pp. 35, 37. (Bentley.) By kind permission of Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Ltd.

CHAPTER IX

A VISIT TO WALES (1809)

LADY HESTER'S idea of retiring into Wales grew out of a journey she had made into the Principality during the preceding summer. Impatient of suffering, she was longing to distract her mind from the sad events which recently had absorbed it. She decided to rusticate and repeat, if possible, the pleasant experiences of 1808, when she had stayed at the Royal Oak Inn at Builth, where she met the Rev. Rice Price and his son Thomas. The daughter of the landlady, "a sprightly girl of thirteen, of the name of Betsey Jones," and young Thomas Price, who was then twenty years of age, travelled with her to Aberystwyth, from there to Tregaron and to Llanwrtyd. The first part of the journey was made by coach, the second part on horseback. "Lady Hester led the way on her own spirited palfrey, and made the others follow her in single file; Elizabeth Williams,* her personal attendant, rode second; then Betsey Jones; and next Mr. Thomas Price; while the groom brought up the rear, leading a sumpter horse with panniers." †

Lady Hester's affability rendered the excursion delightful. "Mr. Thomas Price sometimes murmured a little at the rearward place assigned to him in the procession, having

* Elizabeth Williams followed her to Syria as her maid. She thought also of taking Betsey Jones, but the girl's parents would not consent to the arrangement.

† Compare Lady Hester's passion for travelling in a cavalcade with her Eastern experiences, on p. 90.

a peculiar aversion to the vicinity of the panniers; but upon sending forward a remonstrance along the line, he seldom failed to gain permission to ride where he liked, which, of course, was by Lady Hester's side."

In her peregrinations Lady Hester came across a farmhouse called Glen Irfon, belonging to a widow of the same name as her friends at Builth, but not related to them. Autumn was approaching, and Lady Hester decided to return to London, promising to visit the neighbourhood again the following spring. She did not forget her promise, but wrote to the Rev. Rice Price from Montagu Square on April 24th, 1809, "You cannot be ignorant of the severe afflictions which it has pleased God to visit me with since I left Builth. I have suffered, as you may imagine, most severely both in mind and body." Then she entered into minute details about the rooms at Glen Irfon she wanted. "I have put nothing in the enclosed paper," she added, "not absolutely necessary to my convenience, except the door between the great and small room above stairs." She had asked that a door should be made near the window of her bedroom in order that her sleeping apartment might communicate with the dressing-room.

"I have made no bargain about garden-stuff," she continued, "but, if Mrs. Price and I agree, I intend to send her down directly some very valuable seeds of various vegetables and flowers, to improve her garden, and then she will let me have part of the produce gratis. If her rooms are not already painted, I shall also beg her acceptance of a small packet of paint which has no smell, and which is of a beautiful green, pale and yet lively."

Her instructions would be wearisome, did they not cast an odd light on the elasticity of her mind, which was able to cope with tiny details as a relief from great sorrow.

She asked for tidy rush chairs or wooden ones in the parlour, which was to be carpeted with green baize or "coarse, grey cloth like soldiers' great coats." Besides the dining-table there must be a fly table. Shelves were to be provided for her books. She was to take her own camp bed, and bedside carpets and a chest of drawers were essential. The dressing-room was to be furnished with a looking-glass, two wash-hand basins, two water-jugs, one large stone pitcher for water, two large tumbler glasses, and two large cups for soap, a tin kettle for warm water, and a little strip of carpet before the table. In the room for her maid-servants there were to be two beds and "an ironing-board before the window to let up and down." Lady Hester already indulged in her "extravagant" taste for baths frequently commented upon later by Dr. Meryon, and when she left Wales the bath she had fixed in her dressing-room remained, and for years afterwards was used as a corn bin.

She gave as much thought to the painting of the cottage as she would have done to affairs of State. Mrs. Price was advised to wash over the front of her house with white paint; "it gives such a neatness to a place, and the green will set it off very much." The new paint was to be left quite plain and without a border. "I beg no flourishes may be put on the green paint. . . . The window sashes may be painted inside and out with green, if there is enough; if not, the inside must be white." Two sorts of paint were sent, "one to paint the parlour and any part of the bedroom that wants it; the other, of a darker and different kind, to paint the windows and door of the house on the outside, to make it more smart than any in your neighbourhood."

Mrs. Price was ordered to use the white paint sent, lest she should "set about painting with paint which may

smell shockingly and make me sick for two months." On no account were the workmen "to mix any nastiness with any of the paints to make them stink, or any of their nasty oil." She had the grace to add, "I am almost shocked at the trouble I am giving you, but I am anxious to make Glen Irfon neat and comfortable."

Lady Hester took her coach into Wales, as well as a lighter carriage. She had also two saddle horses and a cow. She skimmed milk, churned cream, and washed butter with her own hands, but she never attempted to make cheese.

It amused her to play the great lady in Wales.

"She was very compassionate and bountiful to the poor," wrote Price, "and, besides medicine and money, gave away among them great quantities of dark striped flannel, of the coarse grey cloth made by the neighbouring weavers.

"Disappointed and mortified, aggrieved and saddened by the failure of all her dependencies in friendship, ambition and love," he added, "she came to Wales, at once to escape from the expensive and wearisome routine of fashionable life, to be diverted by a total change of occupations and associates, and to be soothed and solaced by the influences of majestic and lovely scenery and of the fragrant and inspiring mountain air. Ostensibly, she sought for health, but in reality for consolation and peace." *

Lady Hester was gifted with remarkable powers of recuperation.

Still mourning for the man she was to have married, she turned her attention to the decoration of the tiny country cottage which had taken her fancy. She wanted to make it worthy of the reception of Mr. Nassau Sutton, whom she had invited to Builth. The lack of robust health was an additional bond of friendship between Sutton and herself. In 1804 Sutton had been obliged to ask for leave

* Rev. Thomas Price: "Literary Remains," 1854, vol. ii., p. 24 *et seq.*

66 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

of absence in order to travel. Permission was willingly granted by Pitt, who wrote from Downing Street on August 16th. In consequence of the letter which Lady Hester had received the day before, he took the first opportunity of begging Sutton to lose no time in trying the experiment of change of air which had been recommended to him. He hoped Sutton would have no scruples in continuing his absence as long as he found necessary for complete recovery. He trusted, however, that the period would not be a long one, and he awaited with great pleasure to hear that Sutton was enabled to return to his post quite well.

Lady Hester asked Sutton to visit her in Wales. There had been a suggestion that they should meet in Bath, where he was then taking the waters.

Her letter, addressed from Montagu Square, one Monday night, was very intimate in tone. She asked him whether he remembered Lieut.-Colonel Anderson,* Moore's "constant companion in arms," who had told her that he knew and liked Sutton. Anderson was starting for Bath on the following Wednesday, and was to be the bearer of Lady Hester's best wishes. She was keenly anxious to know whether the waters were agreeing with Sutton, and how his spirits were keeping up. She suggested that if he felt dull alone, he was to get Anderson or anyone else he liked to be his companion, as she wanted him to consider himself quite at home—which seems to imply that he was staying with some of her friends or her relatives.

Personally she was uncertain whether she would go to Bath at all, but she was determined that Sutton should make a little tour into Wales, as she was going part of the way to Ireland with her brother James, and she thought

* Colonel Paul Anderson, whom Lady Hester appointed her executor in case her brother James predeceased her, as actually happened. He renounced probate and execution of the will in favour of her creditors.

Sutton had better go all the way and pay her a visit on his return.

A few days before writing she had heard from a mutual friend of the name of Hill, who informed her that he was in good spirits. "He has got a Love," she explained, "and says he believes at the approaching masquerade he shall not keep up his character of Joseph." She asked Sutton to write to him a "long long letter," and send it through her in a week's time. Then she complained of feeling wretched, for recent events had not tended to restore her spirits, but she consoled herself with the thought that she would be a monster of ingratitude were she otherwise.

She insisted that Sutton should take care of himself, that he should "see Mr. Crash often, and keep good hours." She herself had kept shocking hours of late, having sat up almost all night to receive notes from the House of Commons. She was expecting one then, and to cheat time sat down to write to him instead of postponing her letter to the morrow.

She asked Sutton to write to her soon, and to explain to Colonel A. what he wanted to speak to Lord H. about, for she believed he had heard of something she had discussed with Sutton, and because she knew him to be most kind-hearted and honourable, and she felt sure he would take pains to state their business properly if it was named before him.

James Stanhope visited Glen Irfon, and possibly Nassau Sutton accompanied him. It is probable that plans for the future were hatched there. Lady Hester realised that the house in Montagu Square must be sold. She could not afford to live there in the style to which she was accustomed.

"A poor gentlewoman, doctor," she said later to Meryon, "is the worst thing in the world. Not being able to keep a carriage, how was I to go out? If I used a hackney coach, some spiteful person would be sure to mention it . . . if I walked

with a footman behind me there are so many women of the town who flaunt about with a smart footman, that I ran the hazard of being taken for one of them; and if I went alone, either there would be some good-natured friend who would hint that Lady Hester did not walk out alone for nothing; or else I should be met in the street by some gentleman of my acquaintance, who would say 'God bless me, Lady Hester! where are you going alone?—do let me accompany you:' and then it would be said, 'Did you see Lady Hester crossing Hanover Square with such a one? He looked monstrous foolish.' " *

The house was of little use to her now. Charles was dead. James had to rejoin his regiment in Spain. Lord Granville Leveson-Gower was about to marry. Her career in political circles was closed. England offered her none of the things she regarded as her due. She decided to accompany her brother abroad, and see whether the trip would restore her health.

Her plans were made definitely in the autumn of 1809, for she added a codicil on December 30th of that year to her will which had been made in September, 1807. In the codicil she made provision for the possible death of her brother James in her lifetime. He was to inherit her real and personal estates, unless he predeceased her, in which case she left everything to Paul Anderson, Lieutenant-Colonel of His Majesty's Sixtieth Regiment of Foot. "Whereas he [James Stanhope] and myself" runs the codicil, "are about to take a voyage to Sicily in the same ship, and shall probably return to England together, consequently we may both be lost in the course of our voyage either out or home in which case it may be uncertain whether he survived me or not." †

This passage is of interest because it proves conclusively that Lady Hester did not intend to leave England for good.

* "Memoirs," vol. ii., pp. 5-6.

† See Appendix A, p. 316.

The Duchess of Cleveland believed that her aunt meant to return home, but she did not cite this corroborative passage. She had probably not seen a copy of the will, and the clauses she quoted as being taken from it have no existence in the document as it was proved.

Lady Hester thought that Mr. Nassau Sutton would benefit by travelling with them. Thus it came about that the scheme that they should all leave England together was set on foot. Mr. Sutton required some persuasion to join his friends, but Lady Hester would brook no refusal. In her unconventional and peremptory way she arranged that luggage and a servant should be procured for him, and then informed him that everything was in readiness.

The letter was written from 14 Queen Street, Park Lane, on Sunday night, and was post-marked 1809. She said she was delighted to find Sutton had changed his plans, and she hoped it would lie in her and her brother's power to make him comfortable, so she begged him to come up to town without loss of time. She had ordered him a good cot, and a warm pelisse greatcoat with fur collar, just the same as those which she and her brother took to wear on board ship. Sheets, linen, etc., she had ordered her housekeeper to look out for him, and of these necessities he might take as little or as much as he wished. She had been interviewing a number of foreign servants, too, and intended to send after one of them for him, "a person who can do a little of everything, and be under your own man;" his wages were to be only thirty-eight guineas per annum, so that he was not a fine gentleman, but one who spoke French and Italian would, she thought, be necessary to Sutton's comfort.

She felt convinced that nothing would do her friend's health so much good as change of climate, and she promised to nurse him with great care. She also told him, in the hope that it would make him feel more comfortable, that

~~the~~ ~~the~~ Sunhope

... she did not think
... to run the chance
... fellow " in Sicily.
... to say if she should
... he would prefer,
... portmanteaux, etc.,
... what he wanted, and a
... the warehouse where
... if she should order him
... short, she went on, " just
... comment or apology,
... that he was ready to serve
... small, if it were in his
... much upon herself, or,
... but she made her sugges-
... for there was plenty to
... by the following
... Lord Mulgrave, would
... soon as he could. She
... as she feared to miss the

... mysterious postscript :
... you did not go, only say
... for fear of histories, you
... suggested, James and he
... to Cagliari.
... she told Sutton that her
... the following Monday at latest,
... to have a passage on board
... is about a fortnight's time.
... then herself. She repeated her
... should come to London as soon as he
... would order his things and engage
... she had mentioned. " You must for poor

H. sake and *yr. own*” she concluded, “for nothing is so likely to do you good.”

The important decision made, Lady Hester allowed no unnecessary time to elapse between the plan and its execution.

The “medical man” she mentioned was, of course, Dr. Meryon, who told the story of his appointment in the “Memoirs.”

“I became acquainted with Lady Hester Stanhope by accident,” he wrote. “The chance that introduced me to her was as follows:—I was going to Oxford to take my degree; and, having missed the coach at the inn, I was obliged to hurry after it on foot, for the want of a hackney-coach, as far as Oxford-road turnpike, where I overtook it, and mounted the box in a violent perspiration. The day was bitterly cold, and, before night, I found myself attacked with a very severe catarrh. The merriment of a college life left me little time to pay attention to it; and, after about fifteen days, I returned with a troublesome cough to London, where I took to my bed.

“Mr. H. Cline, jun., (the son of the celebrated surgeon) being my friend, and hearing of my indisposition, came to inquire after my health very frequently. One day, sitting by my bedside, he asked me if I should like to go abroad. I told him it had been the earliest wish of my life. He said, Lady Hester Stanhope (the niece of Mr. Pitt) had applied to his father for a doctor, and that, if I liked, he would propose me, giving me to understand from his father that, although the salary would be small, I should, if my services proved agreeable to Lady Hester, be ultimately provided for. I thanked him, and said, that to travel with such a distinguished woman would please me exceedingly. The following day he intimated that his father had already spoken about me, and that her ladyship would see me. About four days after, I was introduced to her, and she closed with me immediately, inviting me to dine with her that evening. Afterwards, I saw her several times, and subsequently joined her at Portsmouth.” *

* “Memoirs,” vol. ii., pp. 3-5.

CHAPTER X

MALTA (1810)

IN the second week of February, 1810, Lady Hester and her party set sail in the frigate *Jason*, commanded by Captain King. On the 10th Dr. Meryon wrote from the Southsea Hotel to his sister, Sarah, to inform her of his departure from England. The voyage, which was to prove fateful, began quietly enough.

Dr. Meryon expressed delight at his appointment.

"I experienced all the civilities that can make the sea, or any other place, comfortable," he wrote on March 12th. "I find my situation not merely such as satisfies, but one that gratifies me. For instead of encountering all those haughty condescensions, which are always reminding us of our inferiority whilst they profess to overlook it, and which we feel so sensibly when coming from persons to whom we are superior in everything except in wealth, I find civility that sets me at my ease and a treatment that never humiliates me. Yet with Lady Hester and her brother I could brook a conduct almost the reverse of what they show me: for there is in both such an air of nobility, such a highly cultivated mind, which I am convinced nothing but high birth and the first society, and that, too, from one's infancy, could give, that on every occasion I am obliged to confess a superiority which they never seem inclined to lay a stress on." *

Meryon described the voyage in the "Travels." † After a violent gale of wind on the 7th off the Spanish coast

* MS. letter, March 12th, 1810.

† "Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope," 1846, vol. i., p. 2. (Colburn.)

At Gibraltar

73

Gibraltar was reached on March 9th. Lady Hester and her brother took up their abode at the Convent, the Governor's house, whilst Mr. Nassau Sutton and Dr. Meryon had apartments close by.

"Here, then, we are," wrote the doctor, on March 23rd, "receiving all the civilities that the chief people of the place can show us, and in most respects so comfortable that I do not regret at all the necessity we were under of disembarking. But Lady Hester, for whom, of course, the splendour of a Governor's table has no new charms, how many soever it may have for me, is anxious to pursue her voyage, and to be freed from the ceremonious attention of the people here, who bore her with civilities, which in her state of health are rather injurious than beneficial. She is, on the whole, much better than when we left England. She rises at about midday, breakfasts in her chamber, and at one or two makes her appearance. At this time I converse with her on her health, if occasion require, or walk with her for half an hour in the Convent garden. I then ride, read, or amuse myself as I please, for the rest of the day until dinner-time, and she never puts the least restraint whatever upon my actions or wishes. In fact, her disposition is the most obliging you can possibly conceive, and the familiar and kind manner in which she treats me has the best effect on persons around me, from all of whom, through her, I experience the politest civilities. At about six we meet at the Convent to dinner, and the General's table is, of course, made up of the best company in the place." *

At Gibraltar Lady Hester met the Marquis of Sligo† and Mr. Michael Crawford Bruce. The former was yachting in the Mediterranean and joined Lady Hester again at Patras. The latter was doing the grand tour, and attached himself at once to her party. Bruce was the son of Patrick Crauford (or Crawford) Bruce, M.P., and grandson of Sir Michael Bruce of Stenhouse, the fifth baronet. Born in 1790, he was

* MS. letter, March 23rd, 1810.

† Howe Peter Browne, b. May 18th, 1788, succeeded to the peerage, January 2nd, 1809; married, March 4th, 1816, the daughter of the Earl of Clanricarde.

74 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

educated at Eton and St. John's College, Cambridge. He was fourteen years younger than Lady Hester, but the disparity in age did not prevent an immediate friendship. Barely a month passed before the friendship, on his side at least, grew into something warmer. Lady Hester was glad enough of his interest and companionship, for Mr. Nassau Sutton left Gibraltar at this time for Minorca, intending to meet her again at Messina,* and James Stanhope left for Cadiz to join his regiment, the 1st Foot Guards.

A long stay at the Rock was not desirable, owing to the warlike aspect of that part of the world; and on April 7th Lady Hester, escorted by Mr. Bruce, set sail from Gibraltar on the *Cerberus*, under Captain Whitby, landing at Malta on the 21st, after anchoring at Port Mahon, Minorca, a spot captured for the English by the valour of her ancestor.†

It was Lady Hester's intention to stay in Sicily for a year or two, but the political situation was critical.

"It now seems a question whether we shall go there at all," wrote Dr. Meryon on April 21st. "This new alliance of Buona-parte‡ brings the Queen of Sicily into the number of his relations, and her intriguing spirit will never be quiet until she has brought her troops into her kingdom also. Forty-five thousand men are now marching through Italy for that purpose, and I question if Lady Hester will not be persuaded to await the issue awhile where we are."§

* It is not on record that he did so, and he then and there disappears from her story—too suddenly for his departure to pass entirely without comment. It is possible that the arrival of Mr. Bruce on the scene influenced his decision.

† James Stanhope, first Earl Stanhope (1673–1721), who married Lucy, younger daughter of Thomas Pitt (see p. xvi). On July 21st, 1717, he was raised to the peerage as Baron Stanhope of Elvaston and Viscount Stanhope of Mahon, in commemoration of his capture of Port Mahon in 1708.

‡ Napoleon's marriage with Marie Louise on March 2nd, 1810.

§ MS. letter. April 21, 1810.

At Malta Lady Hester, instead of accepting an offer from the Governor of the Island * of a part of the palace for her residence, threw herself upon the hospitality of the Commissary-General, Mr. Fernandez, and his wife.

Fernandez was indebted to her "for a step in his department," and his wife was sister to Elizabeth Williams, who served her for many years in England and in the East. They were "pleasant people," and Lady Hester chose them as hosts because there she could be "most quiet and at her ease." Though better in health than when she left England, she was affected by grief at parting from her brother.

Dr. Meryon described his room in the house of Mr. Fernandez, formerly the Hôtel de France, as "an old-fashioned and somewhat gloomy chamber, with a stone floor and windows like embrasures, at least 20 feet apart" —perhaps once the dormitory of some renowned knight. He did not state whether Lady Hester was more luxuriously quartered.

"She is the best lady that ever breathed," he wrote, more than ever charmed with her graciousness, "and makes me grateful for the kind treatment I have hitherto experienced from her" †; and again, "She is very kind to me, and by the light in which she holds me forth, begets civilities from other people in my behalf." ‡

After spending a week in Malta, Lady Hester contrived, according to his account, "to affront almost all the women in the place." "She has," he wrote,

"the most thorough contempt for her sex; at least, that part of it who converse on nothing but visits, caps and bonnets, and such frivolous subjects. Hence it is that the moment she dis-

* General [Sir Hildebrand] Oakes; he was created a baronet three years after Lady Hester was at Malta, and died in 1822.

† MS. letter, April 21st, 1810.

‡ MS. letter, April 24th, 1810.

76 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

covers one to be of that class, and her knowledge of mankind very soon puts her in possession of a person's character, she seldom fails to manifest her disgust and to give rise to as much disgust as she feels. She accepts no invitations except from General Oakes, and therefore cuts me off, who necessarily go only where she does, from many pleasant parties. I am somewhat sorry for this her partiality for male society, as I find the families here are very sociable, and would be very hospitable. One is astonished to see how very anxious they are to enlist a new member into their society." *

John Cam Hobhouse (afterwards Lord Broughton), who visited Malta in the company of Mr. (afterwards Sir) Robert Adair, also discovered Lady Hester's preference for the opposite sex.

"I met Mr. Bruce and Lady Hester Stanhope," he wrote, "a masculine woman, who says she would as soon live with packhorses as with women. I met her again the next day at dinner. She seems to me a violent, peremptory person. We went together to the Opera." †

Thomas Sheridan was at Valetta and many other English people, among them Lord Ebrington, Lady Hester's cousin, and Lord and Lady Bute, who were staying at the Governor's country palace, St. Antonio.

The Butes left for England on May 28th, and General Oakes insisted that Lady Hester and her suite should take advantage of the vacant country house. The heat in the town was intense; and Lady Hester, aware that she might be outstaying her welcome with Mr. and Mrs. Fernandez, agreed to move, in spite of the fact that she was anxious to leave Malta at the first opportunity.

* MS. letter, Valetta, April 30th, 1810.

† "Recollections of a Long Life," by Lord Broughton (John Cam Hobhouse), 1909, vol. i., p. 32. (London: Murray.) Lady Hester, as may be gathered from Byron's letter to Hobhouse on p. 94, had a breezy passage-at-arms with the latter. One may imagine the relish with which she made her crude remark about women and packhorses!

On June 1st, accompanied by Mr. Bruce and her physician, Lady Hester went to St. Antonio, not hesitating, said Dr. Meryon, "to fix in a large château, herself a single lady, with two single men."

"The palace we occupy is situated in the casale (or village) of St. Antonio, about five miles from Valetta. It is a lump of building, magnificent enough inside, with a beggarly exterior, rendered more ugly by a quadrangular steeple that looks like an English church-belfry. Who the architect was is not handed down to us, and he did right not to immortalise his own unskilfulness. But the construction of a Maltese palace requires no more than to know the use of the trowel and how to make mortar. Huge square stones are heaped one on another until they reach a certain height; immense rough-hewn beams are then thrown across, on which a flat stone roof is laid. Round the flat roof stone balustrades, about as large as those on London Bridge, are marshalled, here a little, and there a great one, like a volunteer corps; and in order that stone, like the camel to the Egyptian, may serve for everything, the partition walls and the floors are made of it also. There you have a princely residence, and such as this that once served for the château of the Grand Masters of the Order. But the garden—Oh! *Dio, quanto bello!* Its principal features consist in a terrace with a double arcade and colonnade, where the vines twine in such luxuriance round the pillars as excites wonder in the mind of an Englishman—a profusion of orange, lemon, pomegranate, and other fruit trees, really surprising, a continued hedge of myrtle ten feet high round each quarter of the garden, and, lastly, not one single shady walk to protect the head from the effects of a perpendicular sun. . . .

"Mr. Bruce is one of us at St. Antonio, and although his age, his person, and his known gallantry would be enough to make the tongue of scandal wag against any other woman who, unmarried and in her prime, should trust herself with a single man in a large house, and in the country, yet Lady Hester contrives to do anything that others could not, without incurring the same blame that they would. Besides, she is mended in her health

considerably of late, and really begins to look rather winning. [words erased].” *

It was not the first time that Lady Hester had snapped her fingers in the face of society, had enjoyed herself in her own way, and come out of the adventure none the worse for her recklessness. But now she was not to escape so easily.

Perhaps the wonderful gardens of St. Antonio, and the numerous opportunities for flirtation during the long, sunny days and moonlit evenings, were responsible for what followed. She began to feel a preference for Mr. Bruce's society, and as soon as he suspected this Dr. Meryon indulged in ill-feeling towards her wealthy friend. On March 18th he wrote of him: “He is a most pleasing, clever young man; but though I court his acquaintance a great deal, he won't fancy me.”

“Bruce,” he wrote on June 8th, “is handsome enough to move any lady's heart that is not, like my poor patient, too much a valetudinarian to find a moment for love. . . . I don't like Mr. Bruce. He seems desirous of excluding me from the General's parties, with whom he is intimate, and of inducing Lady Hester not to bring me forward so much as her accustomed goodness prompts her to do. He has effected his purpose so far as that he and Lady Hester have dined out twice and I have not been invited; and this, though not irksome in itself, inasmuch as on those occasions I generally meet persons of rank so much above me that I cannot but consider it as great condescension that I am permitted to mingle with them at all,† is yet disadvantageous on this account, that to be known to have frequented the first parties always ensured me the best reception in the second-rate society—that is, among the colonels, majors, and chief merchants of Valetta. But these, when they find that I am

* MS. letter, June 15th, 1816.

† It must not be forgotten that at the beginning of the nineteenth century the family physician held an inferior position in the household.

Meryon's Salary

79

accounted unworthy of accompanying Lady Hester out, will immediately call in question how far I ought to be admitted into their set."*

The doctor was present at King George III.'s birthday celebrations on June 4th, on which day races were run, the evening concluding with a ball for which all the rooms in the palace were thrown open.

"Mrs. Fernandez," wrote Meryon, "wore a dress given her by Lady Hester that cost £30. I told her she looked like a corpse in a coffin, for it was covered with gold spangles like coffin nails, but certainly was surprisingly handsome, as the ladies' envious looks too plainly testified."

His life in Maltese society made it necessary for the doctor to consider pecuniary questions, which had not been discussed at the time of his appointment.

"Lady Hester and myself have never yet had an explanation concerning salary," he wrote on June 8th. "She asked me a few days since if I wanted money, as she was about to draw. I replied in the affirmative, and she wished to know if £100 would be enough. I contented myself with £50, which she will give me to-morrow. I have made no money yet by my professional exertions. Malta is full of military surgeons, who are obliged to attend everybody in service gratis; and those who can get physick for nothing will not, you may be sure, go where it is to be paid for. Lord Ebrington was under my care for an abscess in his breast. At leaving us he offered me a handsome present, which, as he was a cousin of Lady Hester's, I thought proper to refuse. You will observe that, by the offer of £100 from Lady Hester, it may be concluded that she means that I have a right to that sum from her up to the present month—June—and, by parity of reasoning, to £200 at the expiration of the year. My expenses, therefore, living as I do at present, cannot exceed my income.

* MS. letter, June 8th, 1810.

. . . My present expenditure is now limited to few things—such as the keep of my horse, washing, and, what is most pulling of all, the large presents that I am forced to give to the servants at the houses where we visit, and on board of the ships in which we embark. At Portsmouth I bought a saddle for which I paid £7 4s. These articles cannot be got abroad unless at 100 per cent. cost; and when Captain Stanhope left us for Cadiz he begged mine of me. For, coming out only as an escort to his sister to the end of her voyage, he had not provided himself with one.”*

Lady Hester being assured by letters from Sicily that the island was tranquil, another plan was made to depart thither from Malta, but it was soon set aside and a change of route to Constantinople suggested. Dr. Meryon believed that the English would be obliged to evacuate Sicily.

“Our final arrangements are now made for the prosecution of our travel,” he wrote. “The uncertainty how long England may continue at peace with Turkey, and also the danger that threatens Sicily from the coast of Calabria, are two reasons that urge Lady Hester to take advantage of an offer from Admiral Martin (commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean until Mr. Charles Cotton arrives) of the first frigate that may be going to Smyrna or Constantinople. By the first opportunity, therefore, Lady Hester, Bruce and myself shall embark for the Mahometan metropolis. For if we go to Smyrna first, it will be in order to proceed to Constantinople. . . . You must have heard Lady Hester talk as I have done to believe she can entertain any such project as what I am now going to mention. She intends, at Constantinople, to make friends with the French ambassador, and through his means to obtain a passport to travel through France. Protected by this, she will set off from Turkey, proceed through Hungary, Germany, and arrive at Paris. When there she means to get into Buonaparte’s good graces, study his character, and then sail for England to plot schemes

* MS. letter, June 8th, 1810.

... simile of (See p. 39.)

My dear Sir
April 21

I have been so busy that I have not
at present tomorrow & hope to be
better as soon as you please to come. Be
at all events will be at home tomorrow
morning when you are in the city.
It is Sunday & Monday, I shall be at
home, & on both return with
me. I have then I have seen the letter
of Lady who is writing, but I am
not sure, but say he is come, then
you are long. Yours truly
Hester

An Impracticable Project

81

for the subversion of his plans.* Her wonderful mind is equal to the accomplishment of all this, if she can but overcome the first difficulty of entering a hostile country. It was Lord Bute's wish to have entered Italy with his sick wife, but he failed in his project. What she, Lady Hester, will do, time will show, but if Heaven give her health I do not despair the rest."†

* A remarkable idea, which was nipped in the bud. See pp. 113-18.

† MS. letter, June 8th, 1810.

CHAPTER XI

AN ILL-ASSORTED TRIO

THE ill-feeling, or jealousy, between Dr. Meryon and Mr. Bruce increased during the remainder of the stay at Malta.

"Bruce's notions," he wrote, "and my own are widely different on all subjects—so far, indeed, that yesterday at dinner we came to a downright quarrel. Bruce is the intimate friend of Captain Stanhope, and from his person, I think, is not totally indifferent to his sister.* Therefore, when either I or he must be sacrificed, it is easy to see who will suffer. From whence it comes, that after six months of the greatest kindness experienced from Lady Hester Stanhope, I now find myself injured in her estimation and deprived of those instructive and agreeable conversations which to lose is a degree of affliction, that those only can estimate who have enjoyed them. At my own solicitation she has fixed me a separate table, and until this unpleasant fellow quits us I shall take my meals by myself. When that will be I know not, for he accompanies us on our voyage to Constantinople.

"Be not surprised that we have changed our route for Constantinople. The appearance of affairs in Sicily is so bad that it was no longer prudent to turn our views that way. A month's time will determine the fate of that oppressed country, and the Sicilians will rejoice in the expulsion of allies like us, who subsidise their rulers to strengthen the hands of tyranny. We have aided a Spanish Junta to support an inquisition. We garrison Sicilian towns to give barons the power of life and death over their vassals, to encourage grievous exactions, in fine, to

* The last words are partly erased.

enforce slavery. How, then, can we expect to succeed in either case? It is against all human feelings to suppose it, and the first moment that Murat puts his foot ashore in Sicily Sir John Stewart* had better step on board a ship and fly. Judge not that the accounts you get in English papers are to be relied on. I daily hear the opinions of persons fresh from the island itself, and they are too unanimous to be deceived. Thus, expecting that the debauched queen, and her court at Palermo, would soon be in the possession of the French, it seemed best to be out of the way; or if the fall of empires was to be contemplated anywhere that it should be in those that were worth beholding. Now, Turkey may be said to be tottering on its foundation, and if it does not yield to the superior force of Russia it will be soon annihilated by the genius of Buonaparte. To Turkey, then, we go, and the sooner we embark the better I shall like it. For, less a politician than Lady Hester, I had rather view the Porte standing than prostrate. The first frigate bound up the Archipelago will take us, and I hope to address my next letter from the banks of the Bosphorus."†

Her physician was still concerned about her ladyship's health.

"I find my patient somewhat improved by the air of Malta," he added in the same letter, "but hope she will improve still more by the breezes of the Euxine. She has been confined to her chamber for ten days by a boil near her ear that made her face sw[ell] terri[bly]. Her patience and fortitude under illness made it a pleasure to be near her person. I hardly know to whom to liken her. In person and sentiments she is not unaptly represented by an Elvira, a Portia, or a Semiramis. She is not beautiful like Aspasia, but she would guide a state as well. For talent there is nobody equal to her but Buonaparte himself."‡

* Lieut.-General Sir John Stewart. He commanded at this time about 14,000 men, half of them foreigners. Murat had 20,000 to 25,000 French and Italians gathered in Lower Calabria. For over two months "the two enemies glared at each other across the Straits." The ridiculous conclusion of Murat's venture is common knowledge. See J. W. Fortescue, "History of the British Army," 1912, vol. vii., pp. 315-20.

† MS. letter, June 28th, 1810.

‡ *Ibid.*

84 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

July 15th came and went; no ship "fit to leave by" arrived at Malta, and it was necessary to discuss the question of hiring a vessel. Transport facilities were exceedingly scarce

"for the state of Sicily," said Meryon, "must necessarily prevent vessels of war from being employed as passage boats while the force that threatens the island is so formidable. The French in Calabria have contrived to throw their shells quite across the Strait of Messina into, and even over, the English camp. Several families have quitted for Malta, and several more are expected to do so. Indeed, I am the more persuaded than ever of the necessity for our speedy departure.*

Mr. Bruce and Dr. Meryon patched up their quarrel before leaving Malta, and for a time were on excellent terms.

"Lady Hester, who saw with great chagrin his distant behaviour to me," wrote the physician,† "took him to task on the subject, and has effected a change in his manner towards me of which I cannot complain. But conceive a young man on his travels with an allowance of £2,000 a year, and bills of unlimited credit besides; the darling, too, of his parents from his infancy, the intimate friend of Lord Hutchinson, and a match that the mighty and proud Lord Wellesley wishes for his daughter; above all, heir to near £20,000 a year; and you will then suppose that such a youth is not to be expected to be quite free from pride, or likely to select me as his intimate friend. However, as he will be always with us, we shall find it to our mutual interest to be as agreeable to each other as possible, and time may render us more closely connected."

Evidently Dr. Meryon anticipated that Lady Hester would marry Bruce.

"We are living here at an expense of £25 a week for the

* MS. letter, July 15th, 1810.

† *Ibid.*

table only, exclusive of wine," he went on in the same letter, describing their mode of living, and showing great surprise at what he looked on as reckless extravagance. "I think the rate of Lady Hester's expenditure, including everything, is £2,500 a year; which for three persons is enormous. She often says, 'You see, Doctor, the curse of being a My-Lady; for if I could, consistent with my dignity, pry into the particulars of my house-keepers, I would soon put a stop to the cheating that is now practised against me.' As for Bruce, he is ridiculous. He gives his valet-de-place 120 guineas a year, beside his board and cast-off clothes, and lets him keep his money. And I strongly suspect that his fingers are limed a little. Indeed, you can scarcely fancy what a fine gentleman's fine gentleman is. This fellow cleans his master's shoes, but he does not clean his own. For this purpose, and to wait on him at table, he himself employs an understrapper, but who is not paid by him, and is generally in greater awe of the valet than of the master. Yet Bruce is outdone by Lord Sligo. He gives his three men 160 guineas a year, and twelve a day board and wages."

"At last I believe our departure is fixed," wrote Meryon on July 28th. "The *Belle Poule* frigate, Captain Brisbane, is arrived here from a cruise off Corfu, and returns to her station on Tuesday next. As there is little or no chance of getting to Constantinople (for by our last peace with the Turks it was settled that no more than one English ship of war should be allowed to go up to their capital at the same time, and the *Salsette* frigate* is there already), Lady Hester has resolved to seize this opportunity of quitting Malta, where the heat is now become so excessive that no person in his senses who could quit it would ever think of remaining. We have the thermometer at 85° of Fahrenheit in the shade, but the rocky surface on which the sun's rays fall acts so completely like a reverberator that a heat of 60° would in effect be here what 80° would be elsewhere. . . . From these discomforts, then, do not wonder if we fly. Our destination is Zante, Cephalonia, or one of those seven islands at the mouth of the Adriatic; from whence, after a short

* Lord Byron and Hobhouse travelled on this boat in May, 1810, and Lady Hester sailed on her the year after from Rhodes. See p. 123.

stay, we cross over to Patras, a town at the entrance of the gulph of Lepanto. From Patras to Corinth, from Corinth to Athens, and from Athens to Smyrna or Constantinople will be the order of our route, and the difficulties we shall have to encounter in pursuing it will be not a few. I can assure you I much fear my patient will not be able to stand it.* For when you reflect that we are to travel through a country without beaten roads on mules, and to have nothing better to sleep in than these mules' stables, you will agree with me that it requires the constitution of a mule to stand the fatigue. My baggage will amount to a dozen shirts, two changes of clothes, my cot and my saddle; Lady Hester's and Mr. Bruce's on the same scale. To-morrow we make our final arrangements, and on Tuesday morning, the 31st inst., we embark."†

Writing to his sister, Dr. Meryon gave additional details of his relations with Lady Hester and Bruce:

"Can that be good sense," he said, "which imagines for a moment that distance can affect her brother's love for her, or that being condemned to the whims of a woman of quality can make him forget the fireside to which his fondest regards and never-ceasing recollections unalterably attach him? I have, indeed, of late moved in a circle that I have no title to but by the favour of Lady Hester. Yet her goodness that places me at table with people of rank does not place me on a level with them a jot the more than Captain Amos's mate is with his captain because he takes his meals with him. These people are very civil, but they never permit me to be more than an acquaintance.

"I mentioned to you that I had disagreed with Mr. Bruce, Lady Hester's friend, and that in consequence I had kept from the table and confined myself to my own room. Reflection, however, effected a reconciliation, and we are nearly on as good terms as ever. The present arrangement is that we all three breakfast

* "The possibility of her death," he wrote on July 29th, 1810, "and of my being left so far from England with perhaps but little money, renders it necessary to make provision for such an event."

† MS. letter, July 28, 1810.

Departure from Malta

87

in our own apartments, dine together, and if there is no company I retire when they go to the drawing-room; if there is company I remain with them the rest of the evening. On parties out, I join them as heretofore. But must Mr. Bruce and I, who are probably to spend months together, live like cat and dog, always bickering? I hope he will see the mutual inconvenience of such conduct, and endeavour to render our party comfortable. All our preparations now are directed for the convenience of travelling. All useless luggage is to be left behind. One of her ladyship's maids,* who has got a sister married and settled here, and who has likewise picked up an admirer herself, has been dismissed, with her wages and one hundred pounds for a marriage portion, and she now means to do with one maid† and her valet,‡ who, however, is to be as much about her person almost as a woman would. The only question is now whether we shall wait for a frigate, or take advantage of a Smyrna merchant ship that sails in a few days. I think Mr. Bruce, who takes the lead, will determine on the latter, for the alarms in Sicily occupy all our navy, and we have not had one arrival of a ship of war since I last wrote.§

Before leaving Malta Lady Hester took an affectionate farewell of General Oakes, with whom she had established a lasting friendship, as her confidential letters to him during the next few years testify. The first of the series was a note written at St. Antonio, on Sunday night, July 8th, 1810:

"I send you the box I mentioned. If it occasionally puts you in mind of me I shall be much flattered. Were I in France, where they work so admirably, I might be able to offer you one more worthy your acceptance, for I should order that a little bird should pop up with a spring and sing a little hymn daily, expressive of my gratitude for all the kindness you have shown me.

* Elizabeth Williams.

† Christophe Musai, a young Frenchman.

‡ Anne Fry.

§ MS. letter, July 14th, 1810.

"I am going with Mr. Bruce to-morrow to speak to Captain Vincent. If, therefore, you would have the goodness to allow your boat to come to General McKenzie's house in the bay I could take advantage of seeing every part of the harbour, etc. About half-past six I should think quite early enough."*

* *The New Monthly Magazine*, London, 1843, vol. 67, pp. 8-9.

CHAPTER XII

A GLIMPSE OF BYRON

LADY HESTER'S party embarked at Malta on the *Belle Poule*, commanded by Captain Brisbane, on August 2nd, and reached Zante on August 8th. On the 23rd a further move was made to Patras, where Lord Sligo again appeared on the scene. He was staying in the Morea, and Bruce wrote to him to send his "brig of war" to Corinth to convey Lady Hester to Athens.*

At Patras the ruler, Veli Pasha, sent a complimentary message to Lady Hester signifying his sorrow that he had been obliged to leave the town before her arrival, and hoping she would regard any and every house at her service.

Lady Hester and Bruce at this time increased their retinue, "and the latter," wrote Dr. Meryon, "swears when he arrives before Constantinople he will enter it with a more numerous train than any Englishman that ever preceded him—and he will too."

The stay at Patras was not a long one.

"We embark to-night in an open boat for Corinth," wrote Meryon on August 23rd. "Our party consists, as before, of Mr. Bruce, Lady Hester and myself, one French, one German, one Persian, and two Greek servants, with a Janissary to save us from insults, to procure post horses, and to bastinado the poor devils of Greeks whenever they do not resign all their comforts for our own accommodation. Oh, this land of liberty! I here

* MS. letter from Dr. Meryon, written at Patras, August 23rd, 1810.

swear ever to detest the Turk as long as I continue to hold barbarity in abhorrence. From Corinth we embark in Lord Sligo's yacht for Athens, where we shall reside for some time, and thence proceed to Constantinople, via Smyrna."*

Dr. Meryon was more curious than ever about Bruce's standing in Lady Hester's estimation. Bruce assumed the leadership, and the doctor resented his attitude.

"You would oblige me," he wrote to a personal friend in England, "if you could find out among your acquaintances whether Mr. Bruce, of the house of Bruce, Ponthou & Co., has a son on his travels or not. I think it is the same who is with us; but he makes a mystery of his family, and I therefore am anxious to know."

From Lady Hester, however, Bruce had no family secrets. She knew all about his rank, and corresponded with his father.

At Corinth a stay of three days was made in order that Lady Hester might recover from the fatigues of the journey.

From Corinth to Keukri, a distance of about eight miles, had to be traversed on horseback. Dr. Meryon described the procession:

"First goes the guide, next Lord Sligo's two Albanians, dressed in magnificent clothes in the fashion of their country, with each a brace of silver-stocked pistols and a silver-hilted dagger at his girdle. Then come the dragoman (or interpreter), Mr. Bruce's and Lady Hester's two Turkish servants, our cook, who is a Persian, two Greeks, who serve to point out the curiosities, and Lord Sligo's cook, a Turk. Each of these has a sabre and a brace of pistols. Lord Sligo, Lady Hester, Mr. Bruce, and Lord Sligo's painter (to take views of the country of antiquities, etc.) form the centre of the procession, and last of all Lord Sligo's three servants in livery, armed with blunderbusses and sabres,

* MS. letter, August 23rd, 1810.

Trial of Lord Sligo

91

with Mr. Bruce's and Lady Hester's valets following; and the whole is closed by the packhorses with the baggage."*

On the morrow an entry was made into Athens in the same order.

"Arrangements had been made for our arrival, and Lady Hester and Mr. Bruce occupied one house, whilst Lord Sligo gave me an apartment in his," added Dr. Meryon. "His lordship is a young man about two-and-twenty. . . . His riches have hitherto made him a prey to hangers-on and sharpers. But he has bought volumes of experience, particularly in the affair of his brig."†

The affair of Lord Sligo's brig, to which Meryon refers here, aroused a good deal of interest at the time, and caused his Lordship considerable trouble. He hired the brig at Malta, and, being anxious to man it with a good crew, he seduced, or suffered his servants to seduce, two picked seamen from a King's ship to his own, and that in time of war. When they were demanded by a naval captain he denied that they were in his vessel.

On December 16th, 1812, he was tried at the Old Bailey before a commission of which the two most distinguished members were Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough and Sir William Scott, on the latter of whom the duty of passing sentence devolved.

A fine of £5,000 was imposed, and the accused was sent to Newgate for four months. The Dowager Lady Sligo, a widow, was present in court, and was charmed with the judge's eloquence and the benignity of his disposition. She is said to have intimated to him that the paternal tone and manner of his admonition to the young offender from the Bench had suggested to her the reflection how happy it would be for her son if such counsel and guardianship

* MS. letter, October 1st, 1810.

† *Ibid.*

92 **Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope**

could be continued to him through the rest of his youth. "Upon this hint," Sir William "spake," and April 10th, 1813, saw him wedded to the Dowager. As he was then in his sixty-eighth year, his acquaintance would sometimes make themselves merry on the subject of this match: the more because it was suspected that the lady was inclined to preserve, in her wedlock, a good deal of the independence of her widowhood. On the door of their house in Grafton Street, which had been her abode before the marriage, was a brass plate bearing her name, and beneath it Sir William placed another bearing his own. "Why, Sir William," said Mr. Jekyll, who had left his cards of congratulation on the wedding, "I am sorry to see you knock under." Sir William made no answer at that time, but transposed the plate. "Now, Jekyll," said he, when next they met, "you see I no longer knock under." "No, Sir William," said the unrelenting wit, "you knock up now!" *

Continuing about the "affair of the brig," Meryon goes on :

"The management of a crew composed of man-of-war's men and bad characters of all nations, has given him [Lord Sligo] more insight into mankind than it is possible to conceive. Finally, he has thought fit to pay them off and send her back to her owners, richer in wit, but some thousands poorer in purse. His house has been inhabited by former English travellers, and luckily contained tables and chairs, furniture that you will not find elsewhere in Greece. Knives and forks were brought with us, or these would have been equally a desideratum.

"I employed the first day in making myself tidy, a business I have learned from Lady Hester, who would contrive to metamorphose a barn into a palace. I found my bedroom to be a

* See *New Monthly Magazine*, 1846, vol. 76, pp. 89-91, and "The Public and Private Life of Lord Chancellor Eldon," by Horace Twiss, 1844, vol. ii., p. 238. (John Murray.)

whitewashed apartment, with a window unglazed, having a shutter that at once expelled light and let in wind. The floor was beautifully contrived with large crevices to sweep dirt through, an operation generally performed with the hands, brooms being an article not yet in common use. In fact, it was as much like the loft over the stable where the riding horses stand at home as any place you can imagine. Upon these materials I had to go to work to make myself a chamber. Accordingly, I procured myself a mat, which gave a cool and comfortable covering to the boards. I then got two trestles and planks, upon which I spread my bed, and, hanging my mosquito-net out upon the cross-pieces of twine, I regretted not the want of tester and bedposts, or any of the supposed necessities of an English bed. Some white linen formed a window curtain, and thus in about four hours I was most superbly lodged. The painter was allotted a room that unfortunately had its mud walls within side as well as without, and it required a day to plaster it before he could fix his bed. His lordship, who seems to despise luxury in proportion as he has means above other men of enjoying it, made his couch on the floor of his room, and the servants made theirs in the open air. But, in this heavenly climate, do not imagine that the sky for a counterpane is a cause for complaint. All the way from Patras the whole of us, except Lady Hester, lay in the open air, and the zephyrs that fanned us during the night had a coolness that was deliciously pleasant.”*

As Lady Hester and her party passed the Piræus, they saw a man jump from the mole-head into the sea. Lord Sligo recognised the bather as Byron, and called to him to dress and join them.†

Byron had heard of Lady Hester’s arrival from Hobhouse, who described her “as the most superior woman, as Bruce says, of all the world.”

The poet, who was not in love with her like Bruce, was less complimentary in his opinion. He wrote of her to

* MS. letter from Athens, October 1st, 1810.

† Works of Lord Byron : “ Letters and Journals,” 1898, vol. i., p. 289. (Murray.)

CHAPTER XIII

MICHAEL BRUCE

FROM Therapia Lady Hester continued her correspondence with General Oakes :

"Since the fire at Pera," she wrote on December 21, 1810, "good houses are so scarce that I have taken up my abode at this place, where I have a fine view of the coast of Asia and mouth of the Black Sea. Lord Sligo and Bruce are about to set off upon a tour; the latter returns here in a few weeks, but my lord, out of respect to you, means to take his passage to Malta* by the first opportunity, and to return to us in the early spring. I flatter myself that you will take my word for his having the best of hearts, and being a most friendly creature, till you can judge yourself of his good qualities; then I am sure that you will not withhold him a little good advice when you think he may want it, and I can answer for his taking it well, as he is very partial to you, and thinks highly of you in every way. Bruce desires to be most kindly remembered to you. He is going to-morrow to choose a worked handkerchief for your love, and I shall take the liberty of sending you a pot of preserved roses, which we all think the best sweet thing we ever tasted. As you will probably see Lord Sligo so soon I shall not prolong this letter, as he will tell you all our adventures."

"I have now only to thank you for your kindness in writing to me when your time must have been so much employed, and to entreat you to take a little care of yourself, for I really fear you have more business than it is almost possible you can get

* "Lord Sligo goes off to-morrow morning to Malta to receive the Order of St. Patrik, conferred on him by the King."—Dr. Meryon, manuscript letter of December 20th, 1810.

Lord Sligo's Brig Again

97

through without injuring your health. Allow me to assure you, my dear General, of the sentiments of perfect regard and esteem with which I shall ever remain,

"Most sincerely yours,

"H. L. S.

"Canning has behaved to me in the civilest, kindest manner possible, but has never once mentioned his cousin's name.* . . ."

Her next letter is dated March 9th, 1811 :

"MY DEAR GENERAL,—Everybody in England have so much to think of at this moment that I need not regret not having time to write by this opportunity ; but I must acknowledge your kind little note of the 14th of February, for which I return you many thanks. I received one from my disagreeable Cousin Wynn † (at least, every person thinks him so, and it is so long since I have seen him that I almost forget what he is like, only remember he is ugly). Wynn sends me, as I had reason to believe, a present from the Duchess of Rutland, but alas ! the box was empty. He says he shall be here next month, and then I shall make him account for having lost my trinket. Lord Sligo we expect every day from Smyrna. I fear he has got into a bad scrape about the deserters he took on board his brig ; but as he has been involved by the lies of traders, and of Mr. John or James, the footman, I trust the Naval men will hear reason, as I am sure he intended no disrespect to the service, though he has been very, very imprudent, and it has been difficult to make him attach sufficient importance to the subject, which he began by laughing at, and thinking it fine fun.‡ His servants who went to Athens to fetch his baggage, three months ago, chose to hoist English colours on board a Greek ship, and were nearly taken by two French privateers, and were obliged to hide themselves in some little port for a long time. Such a set you never saw. When he wrote, but a fortnight ago, he had not seen them at Smyrna, so perhaps they are taken for all we know."§

* *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, pp. 9-10.

† Henry Williams Wynn (1783-1856), the diplomatist, nephew of Lord Grenville.

‡ See p. 91.

§ *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, p. 10.

98 **Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope**

She wrote a significant phrase on April 15th :

"I have much to say to you, but as you will see Lord Sligo, I do not know the use of putting it upon paper. He will answer you every question you may ask about me, *even should they be very curious ones*. He has my leave for so doing."

On May 2nd, when just about to leave Therapia, she added :

"When I get to Brusa I will write you a volume. Before that you will have seen Lord Sligo. Pray, pray advise and direct this young man. The interest I take in him will be explained when you see him, if you choose to question him about me. Kindly as you have acted towards me, I should not wish to be the person to deceive you about anything, unless it was your own wish. Lord Sligo will tell you the things I cannot write, and then you will not wonder that I should feel an interest about a man whose conduct has been all kindness, honour, and delicacy towards me. He talks of going to Cadiz; his object he will also tell you. I often have wished I knew General Graham as well as I do you, that I might entreat him to use his influence with my brother to act a *sensible* part. I think I have now said enough to prove to you I do not wish to keep any secrets from you, and you may lead to these subjects, if you will condescend to feel any interest in a person whose actions may appear strange, but whose motives are as honourable as her feelings are violent." *

Lady Hester told her secret to her brother before she confided in General Oakes. James Stanhope had shown her little sympathy. She expected the General to condemn her as well, and thought it better not to write the whole truth until he had heard it by word of mouth from Lord Sligo. Her next letter was therefore non-committal. She was quite capable of writing page after page about public and private affairs without once referring to the topic which was uppermost in her mind.

* *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, p. 12.

" Private.

" Brusa, June 2, 1811:

"Your kind letter of the 30th of April deserves a long one in return, but I have hardly had time to be recovered from the joy I felt at the good news you sent me. That James is safe I have had the happiness to learn from himself, and also that his General has had an opportunity (for that only was wanting) of raising himself in the annals of fame. I cannot conceive any action more glorious to the British arms, more brilliant in itself, but I am outrageous against the Spaniards; you know I hate them, and I think I have now good reason, for had they acted as they ought to have done, what might not have been accomplished? Not having seen the accounts of Massena's retreat, which you allude to, I cannot form any just idea upon the share of merit that Lord Wellington has in the business; he may be a good General, but he is a vain man, and seldom states things just as they are. It is also just possible that Massena may wish to deceive him, and that he retreated from design more than necessity; time, however, will prove what has occasioned this singular and sudden movement. Canning is wild with hope; and if Ministers and Generals were as much to be depended upon as you are, I should be so too; but as it is, I shall postpone being too much elated.

"The news you tell me about the dear Duke of York gives me a degree of heartfelt satisfaction I cannot describe, for few persons ever lamented more than I have done that the Army should be deprived of its best friend,* or shall rejoice more at his returning to his former situation. Lord William Bentinck I think the most honest one of his family; but there were two opinions about his conduct as a politician in India, and we don't want to try experiments in Sicily; it must be saved or lost in the course of another year. I have heard a great deal of General Maitland from a very particular friend of his, and I imagine it likely that he and Lord W. will not set up their horses very well together, unless his lordship is inclined to give way to the General, who has always been described to me as a decided character, possessing considerable talents and great observation.

* See note on p. 60.

It appears to me that his opinions respecting the part of the world he lived most in argue an enlightened mind; they are the most sensible I have heard upon the subject of our settlements in the West Indies, but too long to relate by letter. . . .

"That good-natured methodistical Minister, Mr. Canning, is, it appears, about to take his departure. He is much delighted at it; as for my part, I have no right to be either glad or sorry. I do not think him very agreeable, but I believe him very honest, but whether a man who is only honest is a fit Minister to watch over the intrigues of a very cunning people is the question. Mr. Liston, I have understood, stands high in his profession, and I am prepared to like him. . Frere I must hate [he is frightful disagreeable and an agent of his own vile brother].* By this time Lord Sligo will have reached Malta, and I think I can vouch for your liking him. I perhaps may see him with partial eyes, for I never can feel nor express sufficiently my gratitude for his kindness to me, and the interest he has taken in all which most deeply concerns my happiness. I enclose you a letter for him; but should this not leave Pera immediately, he most likely will have left Malta. Upon my account it was his intention to visit Cadiz if he possibly could, and I trust he will have been able to accomplish this plan. Pray, with your usual candour, tell me what took place at Malta among the sea-officers when he arrived there. I am so anxious to know the truth, as I wish him well out of the scrape with all my heart.

"The rebels here are so strong that the Captain Pacha (who was sent to cut off the head of the chief who resides about two days' journey from this place) was either frightened or bribed, for he returned, having done nothing. We shall remain at this place some weeks longer, and then return to Therapia. Bruce desires to be most kindly remembered to you; his father, in his last letter, speaks with gratitude of the interest you have taken in his son, and likewise mentions your brother.

"I hope you admire Lord Sligo's Albanians; they are not all such frights as those he has with him. Their dress I think extraordinary and handsome. If you leave Malta, you must not come

* The words in brackets were suppressed in the *New Monthly Magazine*, but it seems hardly necessary at this date to omit them.

here, for you would fall in love if you did. How beautiful are these Asiatic women! They go to the bath from fifty to five hundred together; and when I was bathing the other day the wife of a deposed Pacha begged I would finish my bathing at a bath half a mile off, that she might have the pleasure of my society, but this I declined. They bathe with all their ornaments on—trinkets, I mean—and when finished they bind up their hair with flowers and eat and talk for hours, then fumble up their faces, all but their eyes, and sit under trees till the evening.

"I am quite ashamed of the scrawl I have written you, and of its length, but even now I have not said half I wanted to say. Tell Mr. Fazackerly that I should have won ten thousand pounds of him if I had laid him a wager—dear Lord Sligo can tell you what that means, if he has not already.

"Adieu, my dear General,

"And believe me, with every sentiment of esteem and regard,

"Yours most sincerely,

"H. L. S.

"I am happy to find that the Prince has called on Lord Hutchinson to be his chief adviser; he is an honourable, upright man, and will tell him the truth. Lord H. is also friendly to the Duke of York." *

Before he received this letter General Oakes had seen Lord Sligo, and had learnt Lady Hester's news. She had taken an important step. Bruce had declared that he loved her, and she accepted his love whilst refusing his offer of marriage, on the score that she was fourteen years his senior. Man of the world as he was, General Oakes was distressed at the turn of events, and hastened to point out to her that she would surely regret what she had done. His advice was full of friendliness and good feeling.

"What can I say, my dear Lady Hester, as to the very important and interesting communication which Lord Sligo has made to me respecting yourself, and for which your letter of the 22nd ultimo paved the way," he wrote.

* *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, pp. 12-14.

[“It was, as you may easily imagine, a very great surprise to me, and the circumstance is what I cannot do otherwise than greatly deplore, for viewing it in every way and well aware of the prejudices of the world, I fear it must hereafter cause both you and Bruce much trouble and distress. I can, however, assure you I make every allowance. I shall be very glad to be of service to you in any way you can point out, and I shall, believe me, have a sincere satisfaction if I am at all the instrument for promoting your comfort and happiness.]

“At this distance, and without knowing a great deal more than I do at present, it is quite impossible for me to give any advice or opinion that ought in the smallest degree to have weight; yet, from all that Lord Sligo has told me, I will so far venture my sentiments as to say that I am rather inclined to take Bruce’s side of the question for ameliorating the evils and difficulties which must, I fear, from the general usage and customs of the world, and of our country in particular, be naturally produced by such an event as has occurred.

“Lord Sligo has told me the object of his intended visit to Cadiz. It is certainly very kind of him to undertake the task, and I most earnestly hope he may succeed in curbing your brother’s impetuosity, and reducing him to reason; this, however, will naturally require some art, and possibly a considerable degree of temper and patience. Lord Sligo has, I am sure, a good heart, with the best intentions, and the natural effusion of his genuine feelings may probably prevail, but I wish on this occasion he was a little older, and had a greater knowledge of mankind and of the world.

“I now quit this subject until I have the pleasure of hearing from you again, requesting you will command me in any way that I can do you service.

“Pray make my best regards to Bruce, and assure him of the same. I have not time to write to him by this opportunity. The letters I inclose from his father both to you and him will no doubt be greatly interesting; and it is my earnest hope that they may prove also satisfactory.” *

* A copy of the original letter is in the Forster Collection at the South Kensington Museum. All but the bracketed portion is given in the *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, pp. 14-15.

Lady Hester replied from Bebec on July 13th, 1811 :

"MY DEAR GENERAL,—I have only a moment to thank you for your dear, kind letter of the 22nd of June. I will write to you in length in about a week or ten days, and will only just tell you now that I have received, as well as Bruce, the most satisfactory letters from his father; what an honest, upright feeling man he must be! As to my brother, he is rather less wild, but he is not all I could wish. I do wish you could hint to General Graham to betune him a little. The General knows all about it by this time, I am sure; for Mr. Bruce says that he has been tormented with anonymous letters. My old enemies, I suppose, are still at work, lamenting that all their former wicked intrigue to ruin my happiness has not, as they hoped it would, ended by sending me into the next world.

"How can I thank you for your kindness to Lord Sligo? He is so grateful for it, poor man, and to me for having spoken to you in his favour. God bless you, my dear General. I pray for the restoration of your health, and remain ever most sincerely yours,
H. L. S."

"We have only returned here a fortnight ago, and Bruce set off yesterday for Adrianople. He expects to be back in twelve days, and will then write to you." *

Lord Sligo sympathised with the lovers, but James Stanhope was very angry. He wrote to his sister in plain terms from Cadiz, expressing his disapproval. Lady Hester passed through a mental crisis. She seems to have been on the verge of committing suicide, for she refers more than once to the fact that her friends might have been held responsible for her death. Perhaps she thought Bruce beneath her in rank, as well as too young; perhaps she recognised in him elements of inconstancy, or perhaps she distrusted her feelings for him which mastered her so soon after the death of Sir John Moore. Various considerations determined

* *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, p. 15.

her not to take the irrevocable step of marriage. She believed that Bruce had a career before him in England, and that as she was so much older she might be a hindrance rather than a help to him. Moreover, Bruce was dependent for his allowance on his family, and the family was certainly averse to the match. Lady Hester wrote to Mr. Crawford Bruce, Senior, that she would give his son up when the day came for him to return home, and that she would never stand in the way of his marriage with another woman. She acted honestly and fairly according to her lights, and in the determined spirit in which she always conducted her affairs ; nor did she attempt to excuse or conceal what she had done.

She disclosed the depths of her feelings and her agitation to General Oakes, in a letter from Bebec on August 27th, 1811 :

"Unless I could communicate to you the unfortunate history of my life, I have no sort of defence to make for that conduct which surprised you ; all I can say is, had I acted *differently* I should have had to reproach myself, and altogether give up a person whose attachment appeared to me as extraordinary, as I have since found it uniform and sincere. I fairly tell you I had not courage to do so. I know how to make the best of my situation, and have sense and feeling enough never to wish to force myself forward so as to make it at all awkward to him ; all the society I want is that which, if I had been *nobody*, I could equally have enjoyed—a few of his men friends, and those of my own, who this nor any other imprudence would not have deprived me of ; yet I never wish them to commit themselves, particularly those in a public situation, which was one of my reasons for having candidly mentioned this business to you ; but at any time when you might hear me abused, you might be tempted to take my part, or that, in the event of my again passing Malta, you might be prepared to act towards me as you should think most becoming your situation, and which I never could take ill, knowing, at least flattering myself, that from your heart you can never act unkindly towards me."

The *Liaison* becomes Known 105

If she had the happiness of seeing General Oakes in England, she continued, she promised to talk to him quite openly on the matter of Bruce. She felt that she was more than compensated for any situation in life which she might have given up, with any advantages appertaining to it, by the affection of one of the best and most promising men she had ever known, and she would always consider it as a sacred duty not to sacrifice his interests to her own.

Her brother's conduct had given her great concern, and she little expected that he who had always known the violence of her feelings could ever have acted as he had done.

"Thank God," she wrote, fervently, "upon his own account, he has not my death to reproach himself with, nor would I wish him ever to know not only all the misery but sufferings his imprudence has caused me; but all that was over long ago. If he chooses to act as a brother towards me in private, it is all very well; if not, I shall never cease to pray for his welfare, but I can never see him again, nor will I allow him to torment me by letter: he might know me well enough to be aware that when my mind is *made up* upon any subject it is unchangeable; however, I am still in hopes that matters will not come to this; if they do, God's will be done.

"I am in all other respects happy and comfortable, and quite another creature to what I was when I left Malta. . . ."

The story of the *liaison* leaked out in England. "Monk" Lewis wrote of it to Lady Charlotte Bury;

"The Albany, Nov. 10 [1811].

"I hear that Lady [Hester Stanhope] is living at Constantinople with young B[ruce], avowedly as his *chère amie*, and that she says nobody was ever so handsome, nor so clever, and that he is in short, and *is to be*, one of the first characters in these

* The original letter is in the Forster Collection at the South Kensington Museum. Part of it was given in the *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67.

kingdoms. I wish him joy of his conquest, and had rather *he* than *I*." *

Lady Hester over-estimated the stability of Bruce's character. Three years later she wrote of him: "I fear Bruce will turn out idle, though it is his ambition to be great, and I lament that his father changes his plans about him every day, and wishing him to be everything, is the sure means of making him turn out nothing at last."

A note in the original edition of Lady Charlotte Bury's "Diary" corroborates her opinion:

"If ever there was a person to whom the Scotch proverb of 'Great cry and little wool' is applicable, it was so to Mr. Bruce. He began his career as a spoilt child, he pursued it as a spoilt youth, and after having become an Eastern dandy, returned to enact the part of a hero in a Parisian melodrama.† Having reached London, with all his honours fresh upon his head, he turned the heads of several elderly ladies, and ended his public career by marrying a widow lady with several children.‡ Mr. Bruce would have been a very harmless and rather ornamental member of society in his youth had not an overweening vanity rendered him the dupe of flattery and froth." §

In 1810, however, Lady Hester was blind to Bruce's deficiencies. She was too deeply in love to look far ahead into the future, and was content to drift on day after day, deriving as much happiness as possible from his companionship, and from the excitement of her travels.

* Diary Illustrative of Times of George the Fourth (Lady Charlotte Bury's "Diary of a Lady in Waiting"), vol. i., p. 122. (Colburn, 1838.)

† A reference to the share he took in the escape of Lavalette. See p. 175.

‡ See p. 175.

§ Diary Illustrative of Times of George the Fourth (Lady Charlotte Bury's "Diary of a Lady in Waiting"), vol. i., p. 122. (Colburn, 1838.)



*Sir ROBERT THOMAS WILSON, Gen.^l Angl.^{is}.
 Sir JOHN ELY HUTCHINSON, Cap.^{te} Angl.^{is}.
 & MICHEL BRUCE, Gentil-homme Angl.^{is}.*

**A PORTRAIT OF MICHAEL BRUCE (on left).
 Drawn at the time of his Trial, 22nd April, 1816, by Augustin Neveu.**

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CHAPTER XIV

PASSION AND POLITICS (1811)

THE truth came as a shock to Dr. Meryon, when he discovered that Lady Hester was not too great a valetudinarian to fall in love; he probably pondered deeply, but he wrote nothing which might compromise her. When he first foresaw the possibility of Bruce's affections being returned, he expected a different *dénouement*. He was obliged to accept events as they happened, and he made the best of them, as was natural to one in his position. He determined to stand well in the eyes of the man who could influence his destiny for good or ill. Bruce, for his part, unbent, and offered a material proof of goodwill. Meryon met the advance in the kindly spirit in which it was made,

"Mr. Bruce," he wrote to his mother, "has employed a Turkish tailor to make me a pelisse lined throughout with fur something like ermine. But this I have not yet received, though I know he intends it as a present. Thus, you see, he and I are not very bad friends now. The fact was I misunderstood his character. He is unpopular with everybody who knows him only for a day, a week or so; but when one can forget his hardness of manner, which, now that I am used to it, I hardly observe, he proves a man of solid worth, and I think he will be to me a solid friend." *

In every way the doctor tried to adapt himself to circumstances, and to derive benefit from the opportunities

* MS. letter, 1811.

108 **Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope**

which travelling brought to him. At the beginning of 1811 he surveyed his position and found it on the whole good.

To his friend Newman Smith, who had asked for an account of his mode of life in the employment of Lady Hester, he replied :

"It is not without its irksome moments, as dependence, disguised as it may be, must ever be a life of some little restraint ; but the bitter is so far exceeded by the sweet that I could be well contented to bargain for the remainder of my days to be made up of the same proportions. Whenever we are on a journey or a voyage my treatment differs in nothing from her Ladyship's. I share her meals and her society precisely as, for instance, Lord Sligo, who is now with us. . . .

"My servant prepares me my breakfast in my own room, where I receive my visitors, read, write, etc., apart from Lady Hester. About one my horse is saddled (and a nice Persian stallion he is), and I ride with Mr. Bruce, Lord Sligo, or anybody else that I am engaged for the morning with ; or I take my gun and amuse myself in that way. At dinner we all meet, and after coffee I retire to my own room for the night. Wherever we have been, Lady Hester has introduced me to every house she has visited herself, and such things as could be considered in common (a Maltese cabriolet, for example) she has constantly appropriated as much to my use as her own. In fact, provided I attend on her and on those who are sick in her suite, she cares not how I dispose of my time ; and she is a hundredfold more liberal to me than I believe other noble personages are to their family physicians. This is the more astonishing when it is considered that this very woman was caressed for the whole time she was with Mr. Pitt by Royal Dukes, was the friend of Princesses, and perhaps the woman whose society was most courted of any person in London. Hence her inexhaustible fund of anecdotes, her surprising knowledge of the characters of the present great men, and her queenlike manners." *

* MS. letter, January 20th, 1811.

In May Meryon had been sent alone to prepare a house for Lady Hester's reception at Brusa. He hired three cottages, just outside the city, commanding a view of the Vale of Brusa, and adjoining the bath Lady Hester was to use. Three days later Lady Hester and Mr. Bruce arrived, and were well pleased with the beauty of the country. Throughout the stay in the watering place harmony prevailed among the ill-assorted trio.

"Every day makes me more thankful for the situation in which it has pleased God to place me with Lady Hester," wrote Meryon. "I find her, too, very well contented with me." Riding was one of the chief amusements. "Lady Hester, the day before yesterday," he added, "rode into the plain to look at about twenty stallions, belonging to a Pacha in the neighbourhood, that were at grass, each tied by a tether, and with the fore and hind leg fastened together, the method commonly practised here. Her Ladyship is a capital judge of a horse, and wished to choose one of these as a present for her brother. She accordingly pitched upon an Arab, and desired to see him tried; but the groom, who himself was an Arab, was shy of mounting him. Lady Hester asked me if I would venture my neck, and I immediately prepared myself, with the reflection that now I shall see if all my lessons have been of service to me or not. Accordingly, with a Mameluke bridle, but without a saddle, I backed the gentleman, and gained myself some credit by the manner in which, from a furious high-mettled animal, I reduced him, by degrees and gently, to the tameness of a lamb in about the space of fifteen minutes." *

On July 1st Lady Hester and her suite had quitted Brusa, and two days later reached Bebec, a place she had chosen because the house at Therapia was no longer at her disposal.

Judging from her correspondence with General Oakes, it was at Bebec that the letter from her brother reached

* MS. letter dated May 30th, 1811.

110 **Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope**

her which brought about a crisis in her love affair; but Lady Hester was not the sort of woman to give herself wholly to matters of sentiment. She was always deeply interested in politics, and her quick brain was already hatching plans by which she could once again take part in the game which to her was above all worth playing. Her state of mind affected the physician very practically. She contemplated dismissing him on the spot.

"There is a chance of soon seeing and embracing my parents," he wrote to his family on July 18th, probably without her knowledge. "This happy meeting, I trust, will take place before Christmas, perhaps soon after the receipt of this letter. Mr. Liston is coming out as Ambassador to the Porte, and Mr. Canning will return home the moment of his arrival. I shall accompany him; and, as frigates sail fast, I expect to eat my Christmas dinner with you.

"I am not at liberty to tell you the reason of my quitting her Ladyship, because it is connected with certain movements of her own which will best be explained by word of mouth. Perhaps I may set off for Scotland after my return. In the meantime believe mine to be no common happiness who am soon to join the family circle after two years' absence."*

Explanations followed in another letter:

"Bebec, near Constantinople, August 20, 1811,

"My last letter home left you, I dare say, in a state of uncertainty and surprise, and you probably feel some anxiety to know what can be the reason of my having said that I was so soon to return to England. . . .

"I have observed to you in one of my former letters that party spirit is here carried to a height unknown in any of the European Courts, so that individuals of nations at war with each other are strictly forbidden to hold intercourse together. This prohibition holds good only under the eye of the Ministers, and you will have observed that, as well at Athens as at Brusa,

* MS. letter, July 18th, 1811.

Quarrel with the Ambassador III

we made no sort of difficulty of visiting French families. In some of my former letters I think I mentioned that Lady Hester was inclined to try to obtain a passage into France; and, finding that her health has never been thoroughly re-established, it always continued a favourite plan with her, as thinking that the climate there would be more beneficial to her than any other. We had not been long at Constantinople before she contrived to signify her wishes to Mr. Maubourg, chargé d'affaires from Paris, who, learning her rank and who she was, obligingly offered to endeavour to obtain passports for her; but as the business required much talking over, it was necessary they should see each other. Mr. Maubourg could not violate the orders of his Court, which probably positively forbid him to associate with the English, and Lady Hester did not wish to disoblige our Minister by being seen with Mr. Maubourg. They accordingly met secretly on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, and had repeated their meetings three or four times, when Mr. Canning's spy, by accident, discovered it, and gave information to his employer. In the meantime her Ladyship's plan went on admirably, so that she hopes soon to have her passports for the South of France. But the discovery that had been made created a most dreadful quarrel. Down came Mr. Canning to Bebec, and after a conference of half an hour with her Ladyship, departed in high dudgeon. Orders were issued that the English palace was to be shut against Lady Hester's suite, and all the secretaries, dragomen, etc., of the mission were commanded to hold no intercourse with us. It was at this moment that Lady Hester, reflecting on the mischief that might ensue from the quarrel, called me to her, and asked my opinion about it. She told me that however the Minister might threaten her, and however warmly he might take up the affair, her patriotism was too well known, and her credit too high in the ministerial circles to be injured by an inferior like him. For me, she said, it was otherwise. I was a young man who had my fortune to make, and therefore could not be too guarded over my reputation. Should Mr. Canning return to England, and insinuate (which he probably would do) that I was not very fond of my country, it would be productive of vast injury to me, and might prevent my getting forward in the world altogether. If she took me

with her to France, his story would appear the more probable; and besides, if, when we got there, Buonaparte should take it into his head to keep us there, though it would make no difference to her—who cared not if she never saw England again—to me it would be a serious evil, both on account of my parents and friends, as also of my profession. Considering all this, she asked me if I did not think it better to take the opportunity of the frigate that was going to England to return home. Her Ladyship's counsels to me are always a law, and I could not but be grateful to her for her anxiety about my future prospects. Besides, it was not to return home to be again a burthen to my parents, but to a reputable exercise of my profession, which I trust will serve in future to maintain me. Of this, however, I shall say nothing; according to the rule I lay down never to consider anything certain until I actually grasp it.

"This is the reason that I immediately wrote to inform you of the prospect there was that I should soon see you, and that, therefore, it was better no more letters should be sent from England, for fear I should miss them. Since that day I have had several conversations on the subject, and have succeeded in persuading her Ladyship that there is not so much danger for me in going into France as she imagines. In the first place, means would never be wanting for me to get over to England. And secondly, I expressed so great an inclination to see France again, that I declare I would sacrifice almost anything to get there. She now wavers in her opinion, and I begin to fancy I shall gain my point with her. If she takes me, her goodness will be very great; because in a country which abounds with the cleverest practitioners in medicine, I can easily be spared as far as regards her health, since advice will be always at hand whenever she wants it. . . . Every word of what I have said I earnestly entreat you to keep quite a secret. Lady Hester has written an explanation of the quarrel to Lord Wellesley, and as I know not how she has stated it, I would not for the world have any reports get abroad as coming from me. I say, therefore, be close: for if she supposed that my friends betrayed any of her secrets, she would immediately forsake me for ever." *

* MS. letter, August 20th, 1811.

Her Opinion of Stratford Canning 113

Lady Hester's political secrets, as well as her personal secrets, were referred to in her letter of August 27th, 1811, to General Oakes, already quoted.* She wrote :

"A very short time will now decide to what part of the world we shall bend our steps, to Egypt or to Italy ; you must know, I think, we have great hopes of getting to Rome, even perhaps to France. Here is my letter to Lord Wellesley†, which will explain the whole business ; had Canning not been a fool, he would never have acted as he has done ; on the contrary, a public man ought to feel happy at the very idea of anything like confidence subsisting between the two nations, and be very happy to find there are people in the world whose fears will not prevent their making an experiment upon its sincerity. But he is a bigot, and an idiot in all these sort of affairs ; he made nearly as much fuss about the Captain Pacha having given us leave to go up to the Black Sea if we chose it. To say the truth, I believe he is jealous ; I never have yet either asked or allowed him to introduce one person to me since I came here, but young Morier, whom I dislike extremely, and Count Ludolph, whom I think of not in the way it is the fashion to do.

"I have made my own way with the Turks, and I have contrived to get upon so intimate a footing, that the Pacha's brother, brother-in-law, and captain of the fleet dined with us, accompanied by the confidential physician. This may not sound like a compliment ; but see the Captain Pacha's brother, bending under a tree in a public walk, he neither notices Greek, Armenian or Frank women of any kind, but looks at them all as if they were sheep in a field, and they dare not come near him, as his attendants form a circle which they never pass, but stand and look at him for an hour together. I must likewise tell you that Canning has been much shocked at my having gone on board the fleet in men's clothes ; a pair of overalls, and military great-coat, and cocked hat, is so much less decent a dress than that of a real fine lady in her shift and gown, and half-naked besides ! The Captain Pacha said I was welcome to go, but I must change my dress, and I certainly thought it worth while. I closely

* See p. 104.

† See pp. 116-8.

114 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

examined everything; and, as I understand a little about a ship, it was not quite a useless visit. After his foolish conduct, all communications with the palace being at an end, I have not seen Sir Harford Jones,* but this I do not care much about.

"When the answer arrives from Paris, I will communicate to you the nature of it, and at all events as soon as it comes, and Mr. Liston is arrived, we shall leave this place. I find he is a sensible, liberal man, and I dare say he will see this business in a different light from Canning. To give you a little idea of the narrowness of this man's mind, when I praised Monsieur de Maubourg to him, and said even himself could not but confess the French chargé d'affaires had never done a dirty thing, and was considered, even by his enemies, as disinterested and pure, he was obliged to agree; but added, had he been a man of principle he could never live under the orders of a tyrant. I said what was he or any other Frenchman to do? He replied, 'Leave France for England.' 'And what to do there?' said I. 'Live upon bread and water,' he answered. God knows, we have too many Frenchmen in England as it is, to wish for more. By the by, though I have made it a rule never to repeat my conversation with Monsieur de Maubourg, I will tell you in confidence one thing I said to him (having you, my dear General, a little in my head). He seldom talks politics, but one day asked questions about L. Buonaparte: How was he? How would he be treated in England? How considered, etc., etc., etc.? I answered I knew not, but were I a public man I should have put him at first and kept him in close confinement. If he was his brother's spy he deserved, if a traitor to his country, the same; for it is neither to the honour or interest of a great nation to encourage either the one or the other. These are my true feelings, and I am not ashamed to confess them to anyone, and I fancy, although I can do justice to the French as a nation full of talent and resource, no one can better *faire valoir* their own country.

"The long-promised bridle accompanies this letter. I fear you will not like it much, but it is of the newest fashion. There

* Sir Harford Jones Bridges (1764-1847), diplomatist.

To General Oakes

115

are two sorts of bridles here, such as I send of various descriptions and colours, and those made for very great men, of solid silver, weighing, some of them, twelve or fifteen pounds, which their own stallions can just bear the weight of during some grand procession. In the hand, these bridles are the most magnificent things you can imagine, but they are so confused with chains and ornaments that they bury a horse's head and have little effect. I have sent a red one to my brother, but I thought that a dark one would more become your white horse. All those with tassels are made with a little silk mixed with silver or gold twist; it looks pretty for a day, but the heat of the horse spoils it directly, and it cannot be cleaned. This bridle must be cleaned with lemon-juice.

"I must now conclude my long letter, but not without again thanking you for all your kindness to me and exertions about Lord Sligo, who, by Captain Barrie's account, is even more committed than I imagined. Captain Barrie was poor Lord Camelford's greatest friend; therefore, I received him with great cordiality. Adieu, my dear General. Any letters which arrive more than a fortnight after Mr. Liston has passed you, pray keep till you hear from us.

"Yours most sincerely,

"H. L. S.

"I am grieved about your health; pray do not remain at Malta long enough to injure it seriously. I should think if you came up here, and then went to Greece in the winter, and returned home in the spring, it would be a great advantage, for few of our military men are acquainted with this country; besides, travelling and constant change of air would do you much good. I wish I could talk to you, for I have many important things to say. Now the dear duke is in power you may be anything, but pray get quite well. Once more, adieu. God bless you, my dear General." *

The original letter to Wellington is now in the British Museum.

* *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, pp. 3, 16-8.

116 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

“ Bebeck upon the banks of the Bosphorus,
August 27 1811.

“ *Private.*

“ MY LORD ” (it runs),—“ Mr. Canning having threatened to write to your Lordship, I take the liberty of addressing you on a subject I am anxious should not be misrepresented.

“ You are aware, my Lord, that I left England on account of my health, which, though mended, is by no means re-established, and I always suffer extremely from cold. During the course of last winter I had often expressed a wish that it were possible I could visit either Italy or the South of France, which, coming to the ears of Monsieur La Tour Maubourg, the French chargé d'affaires at this place, he was so good as to hint, through a third person, that he should be most happy to give me every assistance in his power to accomplish this object. Had Mr. Adair been here, or any man of known character and liberal opinions, I should, in the first instance, have communicated this circumstance to him, and fairly told him it was my intention to take advantage of the opportunity which now presented itself of making the acquaintance of Monsieur Maubourg, and of requesting him to forward my views in the manner he thought most respectable to both parties. But Mr. Canning was young and inexperienced; full of zeal, but full of prejudice. I guessed, therefore, what might be the line of conduct he would pursue upon such an occasion. Respecting, as I do, his many virtues, I did not wish to quarrel with him, or appear openly to disregard his authority, or publicly to ridicule the very idea of any person presuming to doubt my patriotism; because I despise the idea of war with individuals, and, also, cannot but lament a fault too common to most of our public men—that of seeing things in the light they wish them to be, and not as they are, and trying to impose this fallacy upon the public mind, which, when discovered, must sooner or later destroy the degree of confidence they ought to possess.

“ The above reasons decided me to see Monsieur Maubourg privately; who is also very young for his situation, but which

A Scathing Letter

117

his talents fully qualify him to fill. Nothing can have been more candid, more honourable, and more delicate than his conduct upon this occasion. He lost no time in writing to Paris for passports, and his answer may be expected every day. Not long ago Mr. Canning's spy, who I saw was pursuing me for some time, communicated to his employer that he had seen Monsieur Maubourg and myself walking together upon the coast of Asia. This led Mr. Canning to inquire into the business, the whole of which I communicated to him, and my reasons for having kept it a secret. He has thought it his duty to take leave of me, and also to forbid any of those persons belonging to him to visit me: which, as far as it affects my comfort, is of no consequence, as they are all horribly dull (except Mr. Pisani, who is a man of merit and information), and as far as it relates to my politics, I flatter myself that it is not in the power of Mr. Canning or any other person to cast any reflection upon them that would be credited in this or any other country, and much less in my own.

"Although it is very evident that Mr. Canning has not been educated in your Lordship's school of gallantry, yet I give him full credit for acting from the most upright and conscientious principles; and if his zeal has carried him a little too far, there is no one so willing to forgive it as I am, or so little inclined to attempt to turn him from what he considers to be the execution of his duty. Affectation nor fear have in no degree influenced my line of conduct towards him, and if I have acted with *more moderation* than is usual to me, it proceeds from what may (though true) sound like conceit to confess—the persuasion that Mr. Canning and I do not stand upon equal grounds, and that he is by no means a match for me were I determined to revenge what, to others, carries the appearance of insult. But as he is both a political and religious methodist, after having appeared to doubt my love for my country, he will next presume to teach me my duty to my God!

"Before I conclude I must make one petition to your Lordship not to receive Mr. Canning with dry bows or wry faces, or allow the fine ladies to toss him in a blanket. The best recompense for his services would be to appoint him Commander-in-Chief at home and Ambassador Extraordinary to the various

118 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

societies for the suppression of vice and cultivation of patriotism. The latter consists in putting oneself into greater convulsions than the Dervishes at the mention of Buonaparte's name.

"I have the honour to be, my Lord,

"Your Lordship's obedient humble servant,

"HESTER LUCY STANHOPE." *

* British Museum additional MS., 37,310 f. 77. The letter is endorsed :
"Received: 18th October. Answer: None required."

CHAPTER XV

SHIPWRECK

LADY HESTER, true to her principle of never saying behind a man's back what she dare not say to his face, sent a copy of this letter to Canning.*

"Nothing more ingeniously malicious than this characteristic epistle could have been devised," wrote his biographer. "He was the last man to take a slight amiably, and Lady Hester wounded his 'proper pride' to the quick. Moreover, there was just that spice of truth in the charge against him which added to its unpleasantness . . . he winced at the ridicule which must follow him if it came out that he was acting policeman to the eccentric traveller. . . . A horrible vision of her letter going the round of the Cabinet in a red dispatch-box rose before his eyes." †

Meryon wrote of the results of the quarrel to a friend in England :

"Lady Hester (and, consequently, I) no longer frequent the Minister's house. The particulars of an affair that has set at variance Mr. Canning and her Ladyship in a place where, from the scarcity of society, the utmost harmony between individuals of the same nation ought to prevail, I shall reserve until we meet. Suffice it that we are very militant just at present, and that the partisans on the side of petticoats are too strong for the chargé d'affaires of his Majesty." ‡

* Stratford Canning, cousin of George Canning, appointed to the Embassy in Constantinople, 1810, on Adair's departure.

† "The Life of Stratford Canning," by Stanley Lane Poole, 1888, vol. i., pp. 117-9. (By kind permission of Messrs. Longmans, Green and Co.)

‡ MS. letter, Bebeo, August 20th, 1811.

Nothing more was heard of the letter, however, and Canning was magnanimous enough to resume friendly relations as soon as Lady Hester made advances. She was unable to obtain the passports she wished for, and her journey to Italy and France had to be given up. She planned, instead, to return to Athens, but changed her mind in favour of a voyage to Egypt.

“Bebec, October 12, 1811.

“We are now on the eve of our departure from Constantinople,” wrote Dr. Meryon, “again to visit the magnificent ruins of Athens, and I am happy that the feelings of Mr. Bruce and Lady Hester are so far congenial with my own as to judge it worthy of a second sight. . . . To-morrow evening our vessel, a Greek ship with a Greek crew, is to be ready. Her Ladyship takes the whole for £65 the voyage. The cabin, as usual, will be set apart for herself, the after part of the hold for Mr. Bruce and me, and the rest for the servants. I have sold my horse, dismissed my groom, forwarded a trunk of books to England (as being already too much burdened with baggage), and shall devote to-morrow to bidding the good folks of Constantinople adieu.

“My father will laugh when I tell him how much Lady Hester reminds me sometimes of him, particularly in setting off on our journey. She will have all her keys labelled, all her trunks corded, superintends all packages herself, and says that if she had a duke to bring up, she would make him learn to saddle his own horse. But then, this is all in its proper season with her, and there are moments when she would not suffer anybody under a nobleman to tie her shoe. In desiring to get rid of all superfluous baggage, she has done the same thing herself.”*

Before sailing she wrote to General Oakes from Bebec on October 21st, 1811:

“As the answer from France is not yet come, I am going straight to Egypt; therefore send all letters you may receive for

* MS. letter, October 12th, 1811.

Shipwrecked off Rhodes

121

me to Mr. Maltass, at Alexandria. I am so hurried just now I have not time to write but a few lines, but you will hear of me from Mr. Manutz, our late consul at Bussorah, and from Mr. Taylor, who brings you a letter from his brother, the delightful Colonel." *

Two days later the little party, consisting of herself, Mr. Bruce, Mr. Henry Pearce,† the doctor, Mrs. Fry, and several servants, sailed from Constantinople. On November 27th their vessel was shipwrecked on a rock about three miles to the south-east of Rhodes, the travellers escaping with bare life.

"We are all assembled again at the chief town of Rhodes," wrote Dr. Meryon on December 15th, 1811, "waiting for the return of a servant, who has been dispatched to Smyrna for a supply of money and clothes. When he arrives, I believe we shall set off for Syria. . . . We are all in excellent health and spirits notwithstanding our misfortune, which to me is trifling, but to Lady Hester has been more [serious].

"Being driven back by a furious storm the whole of the 25th and 26th, and on Thursday, the 27th, the ship having sprung a leak, we were obliged to take to the long boat, and reached a rock at the southernmost point of Rhodes, with the loss of everything except our lives," he added. "The day following we crossed over to the island to a small village, where Lady Hester, from fatigue and privation, was taken ill; and it was but three days ago we all got safe to the principal town, facing Asia."‡

Lady Hester's account of the disaster occurs in a letter to General Oakes :

"I write one line by a ship which came in here for a few hours, just to tell you we are all safe and well. Starving thirty hours on a bare rock, even without fresh water, being half-naked

* *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 87, p. 20.

† Mr. Bruce's friend. He was said to be James Hare's son.

‡ MS. letter, dated December 15th, 1811.

and drenched with wet, having traversed an almost trackless country, over dreadful rocks and mountains, partly on foot and partly on a mule for eight hours, laid me up at a village for a few days. But I have since crossed the island on an ass, going for six hours a day, which proves I am pretty well now, at least.

"The consul here is a dear old fellow of seventy-five, who thinks he cannot do too much for us; but the bey pretends to be so poor that he cannot give us more than thirty pounds, which will neither clothe nor feed eleven naked people for long, so we must send an express to Smyrna to get what we want. My locket, and the valuable snuffbox Lord Sligo gave me, and two pelisses, are all I have saved; all the travelling equipage for Syria, etc., all gone; the servants naked and unarmed. But the great loss of all is the medicine chest, which saved the lives of so many travellers in Greece. How to repair it, I know not. . . .

"Bruce, Mr. Pearce, and the doctor are quite well. They have saved nothing; but do not fancy us dull, for we (myself included) danced the Pyrrhic dance with the peasants in the village on our way hither. . . . James is well, and appears very happy, and is *now* all I could wish him to be. Remember me most kindly to Mr. Taylor; tell him I make conquests of Turks everywhere. Here they are ten times more strict than in Constantinople, yet a Turk has lent me a house and bath in the middle of an orange grove, where I go to-morrow. The houses on the outside of the walls where Franks live are only fit for poultry." *

On December 19th Lady Hester wrote again to General Oakes: "We all mean to dress in future as Turks. I can assure you that if I ever looked well in anything it is in the Asiatic dress; quite different from the European Turks."

From this day she never again abandoned the Eastern costume, and although there was nothing immodest in the

full trousers,* long robe, and pelisse of which it consisted, the fact that it was male attire shocked her relations and friends at home.

On December 22nd Dr. Meryon left Rhodes and betook himself to Smyrna, provided by Lady Hester with drafts for five hundred pounds to be spent on clothes and medicines. Their own shipwreck was not the only one which caused them loss. Captain Barrie, commanding the *Pomane*, was wrecked on the Needles. "Strange luck for me," wrote Meryon, "that can neither save what I keep about me, nor what I send from me."† Lady Hester made a similar plaint to General Oakes. "He had on board a most magnificent dress Bruce had sent home, and some beautiful Dresden china I picked up in a Jew's shop, for which I paid about the tenth part of its value; also a very fine pelisse for old Mr. Bruce—and all these things are lost."‡

Captain Henry Hope, hearing of Lady Hester's forlorn condition at Rhodes, sailed thither from Smyrna in the *Salsette* frigate, and offered her a passage to Alexandria. Such a chance was too good to be missed, and the little party embarked with renewed hope and courage.

* "Her pantaloons, most richly embroidered in gold, cost her £40; her waistcoat and her pelisse, £50; her sabre, £20."—MS. letter, Cairo, April 10th, 1812.

† MS. letter, Smyrna, January 6th, 1812.

‡ *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, p. 229.

CHAPTER XVI

EGYPT (1811)

“OUR voyage to Alexandria was very pleasant, both from the fairness of the wind and weather, as also from the agreeableness of Captain Hope,* who commands the *Salsette*,” wrote Dr. Meryon. “The private secretary of Colonel Missett, British Resident at Alexandria, and who is mentioned so frequently in Lord Valentia’s travels, came on board to welcome us on our arrival. A house in the Frank quarter was prepared for Lady Hester’s reception, and in the evening of the same day she took up her abode in it. I was made over to Mr. Maltass, the English consul, and the rest of our party went to the inn. More fortunate in my lodging than they were, I owed it to my profession, as Mr. Maltass was anxious to take my advice on a chronic complaint to which he was subject. And I have found, in the few dealings I have had with people of the Levant, that disinterested hospitality is a virtue they neither know nor practise. On the following day Colonel Missett (he himself being incapable of stirring from his chair owing to a paralytic affection) sent his secretary to show the lions. . . .

“Her Ladyship stayed at Alexandria only long enough to repose herself from the fatigues of a sea voyage, and then set off for Rosetta. A trifling accident happened to me on my way there, owing to my Turkish dress. A soldier of the Bey of Alexandria had committed some crime against his commander, and had deserted. Orders had been sent to all the outlets of Alexandria to stop every suspected person. Mr. Pearce, an English gentleman who is with us, a natural son of Lady —,

* Lady Hester nicknamed him “Chivalry Hope.” Letter to General Oakes from Alexandria, February 12th, 1812.

had embarked in one boat with me, and Lady Hester and Mr. Bruce in another. Mr. Pearce and myself had not got three hundred yards from the shore when a guard of six soldiers pursued us in a row-boat, arrested us, took away our arms, and confined us in the Guard House. It was in vain that we told them in broken Turkish that we were English, who had changed our dress for convenience; they supposed it a feint, and that I was the deserter, and it was not until the next day that, by the interposition of Colonel Missett, we could get released.

"The road from Alexandria to Rosetta lies across the Lakes Edko and Madiah, and the journey of a day and a half is partly performed in boats, partly on asses or mules, the common conveyance of the country. . . ."

On the fifth day after her departure Lady Hester reached Bulak, the port of Grand Cairo, and in the evening she was safely housed in the city.

"A follower, and not a leader, in the march, I go wherever my general orders me, and when she herself, I may say, has no fixed plans, mine cannot be very settled," continued Meryon. "Lady Hester's pursuit is Health. She had sought her in cities and in the country. She had dwelt in the classic groves of Academus and strolled on the banks of the cool Ilissus, but Hygeia holds not her resort with science, nor is she versed in antiquities. We thought to find her on the delightful shores of the Bosphorus, but there bleak winds and eternal vicissitudes of climate have made her a stranger, and though her nearest relatives, such as Temperance, Sobriety, Content, and many of her cousin-germans are not unknown to the Mahometans, still, it seems, she herself seldom resides among them, preferring the society of a fine, florid-complexioned youth, who goes about under the appellation of Exercise, with whom Oriental Nations are little acquainted. Next, we were told, she was to be met with in Egypt, where a waterless sky and perpetual fine weather had induced her to fix her abode. To Egypt we hurried; but people doubt if she has ever been there. We reside on the banks

* MSs letter from Grand Cairo, April 10th, 1812.

126 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

of a river, where Nature gives more to indolence than she affords elsewhere to industry. But indolence, they say, is no acquaintance whatever of Health's. We drink the waters of the Nile, and the untravelled Arab tells us that no draught can be more wholesome. To us nothing was more muddy. We find Alexandria more dusty than Blackfriars Bridge on a windy day, and more crowded with blind than a hospital for the ophthalmia. Rosetta is more full of fleas than a beggar's tent, and Cairo more stinking than a butcher's slaughter-house. Thus it is that the phantom her Ladyship pursues flies before her; and, always a valetudinarian, she always flatters herself some untried spot remains where she is to obtain her restoration. . . .

"There are no inns in Cairo, though there are several at Alexandria. We were, therefore, dispersed in different houses, no single person being able or choosing to receive us all together. I fell to the lot of an Italian merchant, where I am splendidly lodged. Lady Hester has got a little house to herself, but, being unfurnished, she has nothing to boast of, except not being pestered with an eternal succession of visitors, who in these countries never are announced but by their own impudence.

"Her first care, as also that of Mr. Bruce, was to buy a splendid dress in the costume of the country. It cost each of them not less than £250, being made of embroidered stuffs, Cashmere shawls, and decorations in gold, that, I believe, are seldom seen in Christian countries. Thus equipped, it was signified that on a certain day her Ladyship intended paying a visit to the Pacha. When the time arrived, the Pacha, curious, we may suppose, to see an English lady dressed in men's clothes, sent seven horses, most magnificently caparisoned, to fetch us. He received us in a summer-house adjoining his palace, where, in a room not thirty feet square, all the grandeur of an Eastern monarch was displayed. We found him seated on a sofa of scarlet velvet embroidered in gold, and the carpet that covered the room was the same. He advanced to receive her Ladyship, and, when seated, we remained with him an hour. He is a mean-looking man of about forty-five, and was dressed very plain on the occasion. As he rose from the rank of a common soldier to his present dignity, it was expected that his air would have been somewhat embarrassed before an illustrious stranger



Departure from Cairo

127

like Lady Hester, but he conducted himself much like a king and a well-bred man. . . .

"Our visit over, we rode back on the same horses to our homes. It is customary on these occasions to make an exchange of presents. But the shipwreck had deprived her Ladyship of the power of giving, and consequently of receiving. . . ."

"On the 3rd of May Lady Hester Stanhope left Cairo for Damietta. Before her departure the Pacha, Mehmet Ali, reviewed his troops in honour of her, and presented her with a charger magnificently caparisoned. She immediately sent it off to the Duke of York, keeping the saddle for her own riding. At the Pacha's Court was a certain Abdin Bey, who also gave Lady Hester a horse, with its trappings, and this she sent to Lord Ebrington. Mr. Bruce received a handsome sabre from the Pacha, and a fine Cashmere shawl from Abdin Bey.

* MS. letter from Grand Cairo, April 10th, 1812.

CHAPTER XVII

THE HOLY LAND (1812)

LADY HESTER, Bruce and Meryon left Damietta on May 12th, and set sail on board an Arab ship. The voyage was favourable, and in three days they arrived at Jaffa. From Jaffa they went to Jerusalem, spending the first night at a Franciscan convent at the village of Ramleh, about four leagues from Jaffa. The next day they entered the mountains, and slept under canvas on a plot of ground close by the village.

"Lady Hester has her marquee," wrote Meryon, "I have a comfortable tent, the Mamalukes have theirs, and a large one is set apart for the servants. Two men accompany us solely for pitching and striking them. Nothing could be more delightful than our little encampment—nothing so picturesque. In a climate where the sky is more serene than a mirror, where the most delicious fruits are more than abundant, where the bosom expands with hilarity from the very air one breathes, you cannot forgive the man who is not happy! Everything was enchanting! . . .

"We quitted the village late the next day, and arrived at Jerusalem at night. . . . We entered the Gates of Bethlehem, and were conducted to the Franciscan monastery. Lady Hester had a house for herself; Bruce and myself were within the monastery. For I must observe that in the Holy Land, and I believe in Catholic European countries also, no woman is permitted to lodge within the walls of a monastery." *

* MS. letter, July 28th, 1812.

Lady Hester travelled through Palestine, riding astride in the Eastern fashion, dressed in a Mamaluke costume, composed of a satin vest, a red cloth jacket trimmed with gold lace, voluminous trousers of the same cloth, embroidered with gold at the pockets, and over all a white, hooded cloak or burnous, with tassels. Her saddle and bridle were of crimson velvet embroidered with gold. It was not astonishing that she was mistaken for "some young bey with his mustachios not yet grown," and that the "fairness of her complexion was sometimes mistaken for the effect of paint,"* nor is it surprising that the picturesqueness of the scene, the interest she awakened, and the homage paid to her, caused her to imagine herself upon some splendid pilgrimage and made her think that the prophecy of Brothers† that she should be Queen of Jerusalem was about to be fulfilled.

After visiting the holy and memorable spots, they quitted Jerusalem on May 30th, and returned by the same road to Ramleh, where they hired fresh camels and fresh horses, and struck off the Jaffa road towards Acre. Every night they pitched their tents, with the same number of guards as on the mountains. At Acre they were received in the house of the Spanish Consul. Solyman Pasha, the Governor of Acre, gave Lady Hester a fine Arabian horse, and his minister gave her a splendid Cashmere shawl.

At Acre four of Lady Hester's servants formed a combination to demand higher wages. She refused to give them, and they embarked for Cyprus and left her. She

* "Travels," vol. i., p. 193. Once, when riding her Arab mare Aspoor, and dressed in a crimson burnous and embroidered dress, she approached a camp of soldiers. Some of the women who accompanied the troops ran up to her, thinking she was a young bey or binbaahi. She quickened her mare's pace so that they might not discover her disguise. But in vain. When they recognised she was of their own sex they fell back in confusion."—"Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 146.

† See p. 241.

130 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

speedily found others. On June 21st she left Acre for Nazareth. Mr. Bruce and Meryon lodged in the Franciscan monastery.

"Mr. Bruce bought himself a horse for £35, and I one for £13," wrote the latter, "for we thought it a good opportunity to get thoroughbred ones. . . . The day being fixed for our return to Acre, Lady Hester mounted to depart. She had hardly proceeded three steps when her horse rolled over a loose stone, and both fell. Everybody ran to her assistance. She was half-stunned by her fall, and, on leading her to her chamber, I found she had injured her head, her collar-bone, and her knee. She kept her bed for a week, but, thank God! at length got well. We set off a second time on the 13th of July, and arrived by two short journeys at Acre. On the 19th we quitted Acre, and, passing the modern town of Sour (the ancient Tyre, so celebrated in Holy writ), we arrived at Sayda in four days. . . ."

"You will have observed," added Meryon to his correspondent, "from our perpetual change of domestics, that someone must be extremely capricious among us. The French Mamalukes yesterday did something to create displeasure, and they, too, in a moment have been dismissed. The case is: Mr. Bruce is a young man who knows very little of the world, and, his character being very violent, he seldom remains friends with anyone long. It is natural to conclude that the same fickleness he demonstrates towards others may some time or other pick out me for its object, and though I have nothing further to do with him than as a friend of Lady Hester, yet his influence over her is so great that I should always consider his dislike as tantamount to her's. We had a few words together at Nazareth, and I observe since that time he regards me with an evil eye. . . . Indulged from his infancy by the fondness of a weak father, who at an early age let him loose on the world with the command of a large fortune, he has been flattered and caressed until the slightest opposition to his will makes him sulky and churlish; and, with too little knowledge of the world to enable him to conduct himself like a great man, he makes continual strides towards being a little one. From the time I



VIEW OF SAYDA (SIDON), LOOKING TOWARDS LEBANON.

From a drawing by David Roberts, R.A.

Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

speedily from others. On June 21st she left Acre for Nazareth. Mr. Fosse and Meryon lodged in the Franciscan monks' house.

"At Acre I bought a horse for £35, and I one for £40, and a mule for £10 for we thought it a good opportunity to get a horse and mule. The day being fixed for our return to Acre, Hester mounted to depart. She had hardly passed the door when her horse rolled over a loose stone, and she fell. I ran to her assistance. She was half-dead, and I carried her to her chamber. I found she had broken her hand, her collar-bone, and her knee. She kept in bed a week, but thank God! at length got well. We sailed from Acre on the 13th of July, and arrived by two o'clock at Sidon. On the 19th we quitted Acre, and, passing by Tyre, where St. Paul (the ancient Tyre, so celebrated in history), we arrived at Sidon in four days. . . ."

"I shall have observed," added Meryon to his correspondent, "that our perpetual change of domestics, that someone must be extremely capacious among us. The French Maronites yesterday did something to create displeasure, and they too at a moment have been dismissed. The case is: Mr. Fosse is a young man who knows very little of the world, and I have not to say very violent; he seldom remains friends with anyone. It is natural to conclude that the same fickleness he displays towards others may some time or other pick out me for his object. And though I have nothing further to do with him than as a friend of Lady Hester, yet his influence over her is so great that I should always consider his dislike as that of a tyrant's. We had a few words together at Nazareth, and I observe since that time he regards me with an unfavourable eye. Seduced from his infancy by the fondness of a woman, and by an early age let him loose on the world with a large fortune, he has been flattered and engaged, and the least opposition to his will makes him sulk and quarrel. With too little knowledge of the world to enable him to make himself like a great man, he makes himself a great man by being a little one. From the time I



VIEW OF SAYDA (SIDON), LOOKING TOWARDS LEBANON.

From a drawing by David Roberts, R.A.

first knew him up to this day his opinions and mine have seldom squared, and, instead of understanding each other better, we are worse friends now than ever. . . . I have, therefore, on mature reflection, thought it proper to avow to you that my stay from England will last no longer than until I shall receive an answer to this letter; for when you shall have informed me that you have complied with my request, I shall then beg to retire from her Ladyship's service—that is, provided I can find somebody to supply my place with her. For to leave her unprovided with a physician in her unsettled state of health is what, from gratitude, from respect, and from attachment, I will never do.” *

“Sayda, the ancient Sidon, is a dull town,” continued Dr. Meryon, on the same date, “having nothing to boast of but its gardens, which are indeed fruitful, and its water, which is excellent. We lodged with the French consul, a very polite, gentlemanlike man. For in these distant parts the name of enemy is dropped, and one is glad to meet with something like one's self, be it friend or foe. Scarcely had we arrived at Sayda, when the Emir or Prince of the Druses sent a courier to request Lady Hester to visit his province. If you look on the map you will observe that there is a chain of mountains extending from behind Sayda as far as Tripoli. These mountains are inhabited by the Druses, a sect whose worship separates them from all existing religions. Their principal tenets are: the transmigration of the soul, no futurity, the liberty that fathers marry their daughters, brothers their sisters, etc., and their refusal to admit converts. Their sabbath is on a Friday, like the Turks; and they respect Turks more than they do Christians, whom, it is said, they detest. They have at times been totally independent, and are always in a certain degree so, from the nature of their mountains. At present, however, the Emir pays a tribute annually of twelve or thirteen thousand pounds, this having been imposed partly from his own unsuccessful wars, and partly from other causes. From the prince of these people (who, I must observe, has been lately converted to Christianity) came the invitation. Lady Hester accepted it, of course; it having been

* MS. letter, August 8th, 1812.

her intention to visit him had he not invited her. The day being fixed, the Emir sent down to Sayda twelve camels, twenty-five mules, and four horses, with a guard of seven soldiers. These took the baggage, servants, and everything. Owing to a trifling dispute, we parted here with our Mamalukes, who, I believe, quitted us with regret. About a mile from Sayda we began to ascend the mountains, and entered the territory of the Druses. . . .

"At length we arrived at Dayr el Kamar, the capital, and were received in one of the prince's palaces that had been prepared for our reception. It is from a room in it that I now write. Dayr el Kamar stands on the side of a mountain. It contains about 4,000 souls. The town is miserable, but the place we inhabit, as also a villa of the prince about a mile off, is tolerably decent. I have not yet seen him. They say he is a very good man. It is true he blinded his three nephews and had his prime minister strangled, owing to some suspicion that they were favourites of the people; but these things go for nothing in Turkey: and such a man is a Christian convert in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem.

"From Dayr el Kamar we do not return to Sayda again, but proceed, if possible, to Damascus. There exists, however, a doubt whether we can go there just at present or not. The case is thus: A new Pacha having arrived appointed to Damascus, the governor of the citadel did not choose to give it up to him, and the Pacha assaulted and took it. The garrison was pillaged and the governor strangled, news of which arrived yesterday. If, after this, no fresh disturbance takes place, we shall pursue our first plan; but should not all be quiet we must turn our steps elsewhere. Mr. Bruce sets off in a day or two for Aleppo, alone. Lady Hester will not go there for fear of the Aleppo *button*. This button is a small ulcer which everybody who lives there must have." *

Lady Hester left Dayr el Kamar on August 27th, and arrived at Damascus on the 31st of the month.

Bruce had left two days earlier, to the relief of Meryon,

* MS. letter, August 8th, 1812.

who had suffered from his arrogant manner. In spite of his attempts to propitiate Bruce, the doctor could no longer swallow his affronts. Affairs had become so strained that Lady Hester decided to choose between her lover and her physician, and dismissed the latter. He informed his family of what had happened in a letter dated September 30th, written at Damascus.

"Some circumstances, which I cannot detail in my letter," he wrote, "have accelerated that event,* and when you receive this I shall probably have returned to Malta. It is, however, your and my consolation that, in being obliged to take such a step, I have done it with the advice of her Ladyship, and that in separating myself from her I have her promise of still enjoying her protection and favour. 'Do not' (she said to me) 'suppose that, in manifesting my displeasure at the constant disputes you are having with Mr. Bruce, I am blind to his faults, or insensible to the provocation that he is constantly giving you; but his rank and situation, combined with the intimacy that subsists between me and his family, do not permit that I should espouse your cause against him. I find it necessary, therefore, for your mutual good that you should see each other no more; but, in parting, let us part as friends, and consider me, as on all occasions, desirous of promoting your welfare.' As proof of it, she then told me that, knowing how advantageous it was to a young man to see the world, and supposing that I might wish to extend my travels a little farther, she thought she could transfer me to Lord Dumfries, the son of the Earl of Bute, who is every day expected in these parts, and to whom my professional services might be a desirable object. She therefore advised me to make the best of my way to Malta, and will furnish me with letters for the prosecution of my purpose.

"With respect to whatever relates to my dispute with Mr. Bruce, in God's name keep it an inviolable secret. Tell my friends only that, Lady Hester's health being re-established, she stands in no further need of a physician, and has wished me to

* His resolution to quit her Ladyship.

134 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

return to my studies. It is the wish of Lady Hester, and her wishes are to me as laws." *

He wrote again on the same subject :

"By my last, posted September 30th, I communicated to you the issues of the frequent disputes in which I had been engaged with Mr. Bruce. As it was an event which I had for a long time foreseen, it excited no sensation so strong as that of regret lest you should picture to yourself my disgrace, and proceeding from some want of prudence on my part than from ungentlemanlike conduct on the part of Mr. Bruce. As it is, it will teach us to consider the smiles of fortune as always treacherous, and will explain to you the reason why I so often urged the necessity of never communicating to anyone out of the family the contents of my letters, knowing that through malignancy one's neighbours listen to the familiar details of our prosperity only to turn them against us in our fall. It is, therefore, my custom ever to represent things in a more unfavourable light than is consistent with strict truth, and to consider that, though to-day I may be at the tip-top of my hopes, to-morrow chance may throw me upon a dunghill. Reasoning in this way, the fear of disobliging Mr. Bruce had little or no weight in my mind, for I reflected that the worst he could do to me would be to set me down in life where I was, my character unblemished, and my mind at least somewhat enlarged by my travels. Besides, to return to my books and my studies is to me, who ever found my greatest delight in them, to return to tranquillity and comfort; and the prospect of again seeing my friends, after so long an absence, would be desirable in any shape, though certainly more so as a successful man than as an unfortunate one.

"I have thus presented you with the shady side of the future. Let us now look at it in a more fair and favourable light. In conversing with her Ladyship last night, she expressed a wish that, in writing to my friends, I should say nothing of the necessity she has been under of parting with me. For she knew not that I had written to you on the 30th, as my letter had been sent by a private hand. 'It will only afflict your father and mother'

* MS. letter, September 30th, 1812.

Entry into Damascus

135

(she said) 'and it is not worth while to do so until we have seen what may turn up this winter.' She then questioned me as to my future prospects—where I intended to practise, whether I should fix in London, or whether I should like, after returning home, to go abroad again. I told her which way my inclinations tended, and she promised to assist me with her patronage. . . ."

The fact was that during Bruce's absence at Aleppo Lady Hester temporised. She saw no reason why Dr. Meryon should hasten his departure. She wanted him to escort her when she entered Damascus. It had been suggested by the interpreter and the Turkish chokadar that she would be well advised to veil herself on entering this city, but she resolutely refused to do so. She added to her costume a fine Bagdad abah or mantle, but declared that she intended to enter Damascus in broad daylight, unveiled.

Her progress was a triumph.

"The people gazed at us," wrote Meryon, "and all eyes were turned towards her Ladyship. Her feminine looks passed with many, without doubt, for those of a beardless youth. More saw at once that it must be a woman, but before they could recover from their astonishment we had passed on." †

* MS. letter, October 12th, 1812.

† "Travels," vol. I., p. 367.

CHAPTER XVIII

AMONG THE ARAB TRIBES

AS soon as she was settled at Damascus, Lady Hester once more turned to correspondence. She had plenty of exciting adventures to tell her friends. / She was regarded there as Queen (Meleki), as an oracle, and as the darling of the troops, who seemed "to think her a deity" because she could ride and wore arms.

"If I was once to begin to give you my history since I left Acre," she wrote to General Oakes on September 30th, 1812, "I should fill all my paper with the honours which have been paid me. The pacha here has given me two horses, but neither fit for you; another, which was presented me by the Emir Beshyr, or Prince of the Druses, would have just done; but I found he was so vicious (a rare thing in this country) that I gave him to my Janissary, who is the best rider I have seen since I left Egypt." *

She was at this time planning to go to Palmyra.

"I am so hurried just now," she added. "Arab chiefs tormenting me from morning till night, all anxious to attend me upon my intended journey to Palmyra. Mr. North [afterwards Lord Guildford] offered money and used all the interest he had to accomplish getting there, but in vain; but I have succeeded. I cannot set off under a week, but my camels from the desert are arrived, and I hope all will do well. Everybody is surprised at my courage, as above 80,000 Arabs will be upon their march in a fortnight to winter quarters, and I have determined to go straight into one of the largest Bedouin camps. . . .

* *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, pp. 229-30.

"Bruce's father says that Lord Dumfries has decided upon coming out as soon as the July Oxford term was up; if so, he ought to be at Malta by this time. . . . I must now speak to you of the Druses, that extraordinary and mysterious people who inhabit the Mount Lebanon. I hope if I ever see you again to be able to reach Mr. North in my account of them. I will only now mention a fact which I can state as positive, having been eye-witness to it—it is that they eat raw meat. I purchased of a Druse an immense sheep, the tail weighing twelve pounds, and desired it to be taken to a village, where I ordered the people to assemble to eat. When I arrived the sheep was alive; the moment it was killed it was skinned and brought in raw upon a sort of dish made of matting, and in less than half an hour it was all devoured. The women ate of it as well as the men. The pieces of raw fat they swallowed was really frightful.

"I understand so well feeling my ground with savage people that I can ask questions no other person dares to put to them; but it would not be proper to repeat here those I asked even the sages, and still less their answers. Anyone who asks a religious question may be murdered without either the Emir Beshyr (the Prince of the Mountain) or the Sheik Beshyr (the Governor) being able to punish the offender.

"Nothing ever equalled the honours paid me by these men. The Prince is a mild, amiable man, but the Governor has proved a Lucifer, and I am the first traveller he ever allowed to walk over his palace, which has been the scene of several massacres. The two days I spent with him I enjoyed very much, and you will be surprised at it when I tell you that he judged it necessary to make one of his chief officers taste out of my cup before I drank, for fear of poison; but I am used to that; but this man upon his knees before me looked more solemn than usual." *

Soon after Lady Hester's arrival at Damascus unrest in the neighbourhood made her think of her own safety.

"The pacha," she wrote on October 12th, "has offended all the cavalry (the Delibaches commanded by the son of the famous deposed pacha, Youseff Pacha), the infantry (the Albanians) are

* *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, pp. 230-1.

138 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

on the side of the present pacha, and every day a battle is expected. A report also has been in circulation that 50,000 Wahabees are within four days' journey of this city, but I do not believe it. It takes its rise from a letter from Mecca to the pacha saying *several* thousand dromedaries mounted by Wahabees have set off they know not where, but not improbably for this place, which they once before attempted to take, but were driven back, after having burnt and ransacked every village upon the road. Why this concerns me is for this reason: The strongest tribe of Bedouin Arabs, my friends, who do not like the present pacha, will probably join any party against him, and there will be a fine confusion in the desert as well as here, and the roads in every direction will be filled with Delibaches, etc., etc. These men are more dreaded in every part of Turkey than you can imagine, as they stick at nothing. But, luckily for me, I am well known to some thousands who have been in the habit of seeing me with their chief visiting their horses; he has visited me accompanied by some of them, and they have everywhere treated me with the greatest civility, even when their chief has not been with them; so I have less to fear than anyone else, but yet when such disturbances take place few are safe. But should the worst come to the worst, I shall take fifty of them and set off to my friend the Emir Beshyr, the Prince of the Mountains, where I shall be quite safe. He has 100,000 troops at his disposal, which he can assemble in three days, and nothing was ever so kind as he has been to me; therefore hear what you may, believe me better off than anyone else. The bey who commands the Delibaches took a fancy to me when at Cairo, and everything he can command is at my disposal, I know. He is a simple, honest soldier, and has no intrigue about him at all, and is extremely beloved by the troops. It is a good thing that old North is safe off, for he would be in a sad fright. I am not at all, knowing my own presence of mind under all circumstances, and that I have excellent friends in this country." *

Her alarm was unnecessary. There was no rising. She wrote from Damascus a few days later to General Oakes:

* *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, pp. 235-6.

A Visit to a Syrian Chief 139

"The Wahabees (which were the subject of my last letter) have not been heard of near this town. It is said that a small number of them have arrived at Palmyra, but that is of no consequence. Whether it was the report of their being upon the road for this place, or that the pacha was unable to settle the dispute with his troops, which induced him to send a positive order to an old figure like Sir David* to come here directly (the head of everything military in Syria) I know not, but this sensible, popular, and active old fellow suddenly appeared, and was shortly after commanded to take a strong body of troops and go over all the pachalic of Damascus instead of the pacha. During the time he was here he expressed a great wish to make my acquaintance, and that I should visit him, 'for,' said he, 'I shall be very jealous of my young chief if she does not.' Knowing the state of things, the rebellious spirit of the troops, their exultation at his arrival, etc., I considered this visit as an awful thing; yet I was determined to go, as everything military seemed to have set their heart upon it.

"I first was obliged to ride through a yard full of horses, then to walk through several hundred, perhaps a thousand, Delibaches, and then to present myself to not less than fifty officers and grandees, the old chief in the corner, and my friend, the young bey (Youseff Pacha's son), next to him, who rose to give me his place. I remained there about an hour; the old fellow was so delighted with me that he gave me his own house upon the borders of the desert for as long a time as I choose to inhabit it; he offered me a hundred Delibaches to escort me all over Syria; he sent off an express to put, as he said, his most confidential officer under my command, that nothing I asked was to be refused. In short, nothing could equal his civility; besides, it was accompanied with a degree of *heartiness* which you seldom meet with in a Turk. The next day he sent me a very fine little two-year-old Arab horse to train up in my own way.

"The chief of 40,000 Arabs, Mahannah el Fadel, arrived here about the same time to get 4,000 camels and several thousand sheep released, which the pacha had seized. His sons have been my friends ever since I came here, but as the father is reckoned

* Sir David Dundas, Commander-in-Chief of the Army from 1809-11.

as harsh as he is cunning, I little thought to manage him as I have done. He, his eldest son, and about twenty-five Arabs dined with me, and were all enchanted, and the *meleki*, the queen, is in the mouth of every Arab, both in Damascus and the desert. As to the Wahabees, Mahannah assures me that as one of *his family* he shall guarantee me with his life, and whether I meet or do not meet with them it is the same thing. To see this extraordinary people is what I wish, but not in the town or environs of Damascus, to be confounded with the crowd of those they wish to injure." *

Bruce, becoming acquainted with Lady Hester's plan of going to Palmyra, decided to hasten his departure from Aleppo, so that he might escort her thither. On the road he was taken ill, and Lady Hester immediately dispatched Dr. Meryon to attend upon him. She had been keeping the two apart as much as possible, but this unlooked-for event brought them together again.

"Her goodness extending beyond what I was aware of," wrote Meryon, "formed the plan of separating us for a time, in order that solitude might induce me to reflect on my situation, as reflection would cause him to regret my loss. Her plan, as her plans always are, was successful. Your prayer, that I should be sensible of the blessings showered down upon me, was heard, and, the storm now over, I find myself by Lady Hester's side, as happy as health, prosperity, and comfort can make me. Mr. Bruce had set off from Aleppo, on his way to the desert, when news arrived that he was ill on the road. This was in the middle of October. Taking my medicine chest with me, I set off immediately, and met him at this place,† a populous town north of Damascus, in the direction of Aleppo. I found him recovered, and, informing him that Lady Hester had not yet quitted Damascus, he pursued his way thither by the route of Baalbeck. . . ." ‡

Lady Hester was not pleased at the reason he gave for his return.

* *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, pp. 237-8.

† Hamah.

‡ MS. letter, December 19th, 1812.

Preparations for Palmyra

141

"Bruce and Mr. Barker,"* she wrote to General Oakes, "are now upon their road from Aleppo, because they took it into their heads I must go with a caravan to Palmyra. No caravan goes the road I intended to go, and if it had, as I told them, nothing should persuade me to join one. This put them into a fright, so they are coming with a wire thing, a tartaravan, which Mr. Barker pronounces necessary, but which all the consuls in the universe shall never persuade me to get into. What an absurd idea, in case of danger, to be stuck upon a machine, the tartaravangees running away and leaving you to the mercy of two obstinate mules; the swiftest horse one can find is the best thing, and what the Arabs often owe their lives to. My second messenger (saying more positively than the first that whether they come or not I would have nothing to do with a tartaravan or caravan) had only left this place three days when the caravan between Homs and Damascus (composed of several hundred persons and fifty armed men, I believe) was attacked by Arabs, and sixteen men killed. Who is right—I or the Consul-General?"†

The Pacha, the chiefs of the Delibaches, and the Arabs had answered for her safety, and Lady Hester determined to set off for Homs, where she expected to meet Bruce and Mr. Barker with only four armed men "just to keep watch about the tents at night, and to have an eye upon the horses that no stray robber may make off with them." She felt that she was perfectly safe in the hands of the "great tribes, etc."

Her journey to Palmyra, however, was postponed.

"Bruce and Mr. Barker," she wrote from Damascus early in November, "arrived here about the first; the latter has been laid up with fever ever since, and I have given up my journey to the desert for the present, as the pacha insists upon sending 800 or 1,000 men with me, and the expense would be ruin; but

* The English Consul at Aleppo.

† *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, p. 238.

142 **Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope**

I am going off to Homs to-morrow, and in the course of the winter shall contrive to go in some way or other.

"It seems very cross to be angry at people being anxious about you, but had Bruce and Mr. Barker made less fuss about my safety, and let me had perfectly my own way, I should have been returned by this time from Palmyra. But this, and the state of the country, I do not wish to be the conversation of Malta, for it might be scribbled back again here by some of the merchants. Yet I cannot but regret that (for I had leave to dig and do everything I pleased at Palmyra), chance having put such extraordinary power in my hands, it has been lost by mismanagement. It is not here as in other parts of the world; if you only go a mile to the right instead of the left, which you have not previously bargained to do, your camels leave you, your guards won't stir out of their district, you must pay them to go on, etc. Therefore, it was very fine and very natural to write every three days from Aleppo—we will meet here, then there, and to make fifty changes, and to express fifty fears. For people who did not know the country it might be expected, but those who did ought to have been aware it would have been taken advantage of, which has been the case." *

* *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, p. 240.

CHAPTER XIX

PALMYRA (1813)

THE year 1812 passed, leaving Lady Hester dissatisfied because her will had been thwarted. She blamed both Bruce and Barker for the failure of her proposed trip to Palmyra. Utterly undaunted by the obstacles put in her path, she determined to go there on the first opportunity.

"I have been obliged to give up my long-intended journey to Palmyra for the present," she wrote to General Oakes on January 25, 1813, "for the pacha *would* send me, and the Arabs *would* take me, and there was such a fuss about it altogether, that it would not have been prudent to have undertaken it from Damascus. I now can account why the pacha's man, into whose hands I was to be consigned, would take 1,000 men, because the Arab chief had threatened to cut off his beard, and strip all his people naked, if he took me at all—the honour, the Arab said, should be his, as the desert was his. In the spring, however, we mean to try it again, and hope to succeed. When Bruce was nursing Mr. Barker, who had a fever, I made an experiment upon the good faith of the Arabs. I went with the great chief, Mahannah el Fadel (who commands 40,000 men), into the desert for a week, and marched three days with their encampment. I was treated with the greatest respect and hospitality, and it was, perhaps, altogether the most curious sight I ever saw—horses and mares fed upon camels' milk, Arabs living upon little else, except a little rice, and sometimes a sort of bread; the space around me covered with living things, 12,000 camels coming to water from one tribe only. The old poets from the banks of the Euphrates, singing the praises and the feats of ancient heroes,

children quite naked, women with lips dyed light blue and their nails red, and hands all over flowers and designs of different kinds, a chief who is obeyed like a great king, starvation and pride so mixed that I really could not have had an idea of it; even the cloths I presented to the sons of Mahannah they could not carry, indeed hold, but called a black slave to take them. However, I have every reason to be perfectly contented with their conduct towards me, and I am the *queen* with them all. . . .

"Bruce is in very good health, and means to write to you; the doctor is curing Arab chiefs somewhere about Palmyra. After the experiment I made in going alone amongst these people, I thought I might safely send him, which I did, with a single Arab, who was to put him into the hands of my powerful friend, Mahannah El Fadel. He went very safe, and was extremely well treated the last time I heard, but Mahannah told him that if Bruce attempted to come into the desert, unless with me, he would cut off the heads of those who brought him before his eyes." *

She also wrote to Sir Henry Williams Wynn at this time, telling him of all the conquests she had made of great Turks, young Beys, chiefs of Delibaches, and lastly of the great Emir Mahannah el Fadel, Chief of the Anizi Arabs.

"The troops under his command," she declared, "amount to 40,000 men, who are all ready to draw their swords for me, and the Meleki is the subject of conversation all over the desert. You will say, 'How is it, then, you have not yet been to the seat of your empire, to Palmyra?' † For this reason—I took the determination to set off alone to Homs, or Hamah, and pay at least my promised visit to Mahannah el Fadel, should he yet be on the borders of the desert. I found he had waited for me twenty-four days. I sent for him, and spent a week with *my people* in their tents, and marched three days with them. I had previously disarmed my servants, saying I put myself into the hands of God and the Great Emir, which succeeded admirably, for I did not

* *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, p. 232.

† An allusion to the prophecy that Lady Hester should be Queen of the East.

Preparations for Palmyra 145

lose the value of a para, and was treated with the greatest kindness and respect. I was dressed as a Bedouin, and ate with my *hands* (not *fingers*), drank camel's milk, and rode surrounded by 100 lances. What a sight it is at night to see horses, mares, and camels repair to the tents! No one can have an idea of it who has not seen it. This morning 12,000 camels belonging to one tribe were taken to drink at once.

"After this experiment I think I can rely on Mahannah's word, which has once more determined Bruce and myself to go to Palmyra under his protection. The reason I now find why Masoud Agar would have 1,000 men to accompany me was that Mahannah's son had vowed that, if he attempted to take me into the desert, the Bedouins would cut off his beard, strip his men all naked, and yet still not hurt one hair of my head; but the honour of escorting their queen should be theirs. I have orderly Arabs at my command, receive dispatches every two or three days giving me an account of what is going forward in the desert, of what battles have been fought and with what tribe war has been declared. The Faydans, the powerful enemies, are now driven to the neighbourhood of Bagdad, but parties still come this way—at least, about Palmyra. This is the danger of going with the Mahannah, yet, please God, I must go.

"I have had nine horses given me, three bad and six good ones, and yet I would not take any from the Arabs. The Mahannah offered me his own mare. I respect poverty and independence; I am an example that it succeeds in some parts of the world; for if your very self-important uncle was to come here, and *snort* to the right and the left, he would do nothing either with Turks or Arabs. To command is to be really great; to have talents is to talk sense without a book in one's hand; and to have manners is to be able to accommodate oneself to the customs and tastes of others, and to make them either fear or love you. . . .

"If my red shaloon at Constantinople amused you, what would you say to my present dress? It is that of the son of a chief, or young chief. A Bedouin handkerchief, bound on with a sort of rope made of camel's hair, a curly sheepskin pelisse, a white abba, with a little gold on the right shoulder, crimson loop and button, and two crimson strings to fasten it. This is the *true thing*, with a lance with black feathers, mounted on a fine

146 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

mare, but I as yet ride a horse. I ride quite at my ease, and shall dislike a side-saddle. I am sure the Arabs are delighted with my horsemanship, which is lucky for me. They, as well as the Turks, think people who cannot ride absolute fools. Nobody was ever so popular with priests and Franks, Greeks and Armenians, as old North; but the Turks at Damascus considered him as quite contemptible because he could not ride at all, and walked fast. . . .

"Last June a battle was fought between the Anizis and the Faydans; the former were victorious, and the new pacha took them into favour. I went over the field of battle with Mahannah; it is near the ruins of Salonica. The encampment of the Anizis extended ten miles at least; of this I am sure, as I saw the remains of their entrenchment. As to what travellers hear from old priests, dragomans, and Frank doctors, it is all false; they know nothing at all about the Arabs. I never saw any of these people, except Chabeauson a few times out of civility, but went my own way to work. All I know is pure, without the additions and absurdities mixed up with the histories of Arabs by people whom they despise. During my stay at Damascus the pacha received a letter from Mecca recommending him to be upon his guard, for that a strong party of Wahabees had set out upon dromedaries, and it was thought would make for Damascus. You know they have come that way before, and burnt all before them, and put everyone to the sword in all the villages they passed through.

"A pretty fright everybody was in but me, and for this reason—I have even Wahabee friends, who dare not confess themselves such. Let the worst have come to the worst, I should have gone out to have met them, and put myself under the protection of the chief, and I know I should have been safe; and I had other options to stay or run away when the pacha did, or to have been escorted by some of the rebel troops to the mountain, where I should have been safe with my friend the Emir Beshyr. I don't say without some reason I could have been escorted by —, for when they suddenly left Damascus to join the pacha of Aleppo they sent to me to march with them, and said, if I was waiting at Damascus for the arrival of the caravan with money, there were twenty purses for my use, or I might take what troops I

Adoption of Eastern Ways 147

liked to escort me to Palmyra. In short, the Dillas and the Arabs are the only people to be feared in this part of the world, and I have them all under my thumb. But there is one thing I must make you aware of: To bungle with the Arabs is to be lost, for, though they avoid shedding blood themselves, they have black slaves who are devils, kept for the purpose when necessary, who are armed with a shocking crooked knife tied round their neck, to rip up people, and a hatchet under their pelisse to cut off heads. These people are much more difficult to manage than the Arabs themselves, as they are so interested and so bloody-minded if they take a dislike to a person.

"It was to make an experiment to try my *influence*. Going like a thief in the dark, as you did, fearing the Bedouins at the right and left, is abominable. The thing is to look round one, free as the air of the deserts, to observe something like a flight of crows at a distance—to look proudly that way, move your hand, and in one instant see fifty lances spring in your defence; to see them return, exclaiming 'Schab—Friends.' " *

Lady Hester's adoption of Eastern ways was a never-failing source of interest to the outside world, and her habit of riding astride was much commented on. Meryon speaks of it, and reports an amusing piece of her Ladyship's gossip in his "Riding Habits and Habits of Riding," published by him in London in 1865, under the pseudonym of "The Chevalier Califourchon." "Lady Hester," he says,

"dwells in her conversation on the ease and relief it afforded her in the long journeys she had to make, to say nothing of the ridicule it spared her from the Mahometans, who, when she rode on a side-saddle, constantly turned their heads away as if ashamed of the twisted and distorted position, so far removed from the plain rules of common sense and comfort, in which she sat—not, not sat, but hung, as they described it. . . .

"She was telling her countryman how much she disliked Swiss servants, and that she at once packed off three in a batch,

* "Diaries of a Lady of Quality, from 1797-1844," by Frances Williams Wynn, 1864, pp. 320-5. (By kind permission of Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.)

148 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

who had been procured for her at a great expense, because she considered them an artful and mercenary set of people. 'These servants,' she said, 'when they engaged themselves, came here for no other purpose than just to make use of my name, and having got by rote something about the Emperor Aurelian, Palmyra, Zenobia, Baalbec, etc., intended, when they got back to their own country, to start for England and try for situations in some wealthy merchant's family as governesses.' Lady Hester then supposed one of them to have succeeded, and desired her hearer to figure to himself this citizen's wife giving a party; and she acted over the conversation which would take place. 'Oh, Sir Lawson,' cries my lady, as the gentlemen enter from the dinner-table, 'I have got such a secret! But I won't tell you.' 'Indeed, my lady, you must,' Sir Lawson replies. 'How can you be so cruel?' Then some fat baronet puffs out, 'Oh, Lady Jones, how can you refuse Sir Lawson? You know he never asked a favour in vain of the women.' In this way the grand affair of the secret goes on for a couple of hours, until at last her ladyship says, 'Mademoiselle Pawlean, do pray tell us—was it really so, that Lady Hester Stanhope rode—— Oh, dear, there are my daughters here! There, you may go upstairs, my dears; it's getting late. Good-night. Lady Hester, Sir Lawson, absolutely' (hiding her face with her fan and pretending to blush) 'rode astride.'"

Referring to the important subject of the visit to Palmyra, Dr. Meryon declared that Lady Hester had other motives in going there besides the wish of beholding broken columns and dilapidated temples, etc.

"These columns and these temples," he wrote, "owed their magnificence to one of her own sex, whose splendid fate, nearly akin to that of her own, no doubt moved her sympathy so far as to prompt her to visit the spot she governed. She seeks the remains of Zenobia's greatness, not the remains of Palmyra."

Preparations for the journey were not completed for some weeks.

The Journey to Palmyra

149

"We had not been in this city long," wrote Meryon from Hamah on March 15th, 1813, "when the eldest son of the Emir Mahannah, curious to see so extraordinary a personage as the daughter of the King of England, the title which Lady Hester goes by among the people of the country (who cannot be persuaded that she is anything else than a princess wandering about in disguise), quitted the desert and came to Hamah. He was entertained very handsomely by her, and received several presents from her. During the visit he signified that his father was very infirm, and how great a favour it would be if she would spare her doctor to attend him for a few days. My departure was immediately concluded upon as a matter that suited all parties. For it would win the prince's friendship, by whose permission alone we could traverse the desert, and would afford me an opportunity of judging how far there was a possibility for her Ladyship to perform a journey through wastes that we were told were without water and without vegetation. The 2nd of January, 1813, I set off from Hamah, accompanied by a single Bedouin Arab. I was dressed as a Bedouin. We were each well mounted, and were furnished with two leather bottles of water, some flat bread, cakes, cheese, and raisins.

"In three days we reached the tents of Mahannah, the Emir. I remained under them ten days. As pasturage was scanty, it was necessary to strike them almost every day, and, in their company, I thus traversed the desert in several directions. On the seventh day my conductor and myself took the road for Palmyra, with nothing but the sun and the stars for our way posts. We arrived there in safety. I resided in the N.W. angle of the Temple of the Sun for six days, and again crossed the desert in search of Mahannah, who, receiving a fresh supply of medicines and fresh advice, dismissed me with much civility, and I re-entered Hamah the 30th of January.

"Having established the practicability of the journey to her Ladyship's satisfaction, our arrangements for the execution of it were begun, and have continued without intermission for six weeks. Never had a party of pleasure a nobler object than ours. We go not to see a horse-race, a bull-fight, or royalty in procession. We go to contemplate the finest productions of the arts.



150 **Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope**

Never, too, was a party of pleasure conducted on so magnificent a scale. Our provisions, water, tents, and luggage are borne by forty camels. We are escorted by seventy Bedouins, headed by the prince's eldest son. And Lady Hester's suite amounts to twenty-five horsemen. The most trifling want of the meanest servant is provided for, and the best-equipped military expedition could not be more complete in all its parts than ours. Between here and Palmyra is a distance of seven days, slow travelling. We remain there a week, and in twenty-one days hope to return here to take up our lodgings for a while until we can set off for Latakia, on the coast." *

"The desert has again been all confusion," wrote Lady Hester to General Oakes on March 15th, "but at this moment things are pretty quiet. I have great confidence in the Arab chief; the pacha sent an express for him almost at the same moment when mine arrived, and his answer was, 'The Queen must be served first.'"

Four days later she added:

"To-morrow, my dear General, I mount my horse with seventy Arabs, and am off to Palmyra at last. I am so hurried I cannot write all I wish, but the Sir D. Dundas of Syria I have made a conquest of, and he insisted upon speaking to the Arab chief, and said he would cut off their heads if they did not bring me back safe. I owe much to the kindness of this old fellow, who since I have resided here has thought of nothing but how he could serve me. He tells me every day I must never leave off my Turkish clothes." †

There is a curious passage on this subject of the journey to Palmyra in a letter from Bruce to General Oakes, written from Hamah on March 13th.

"Mahannah el Fadel, the chief of all the tribes known by the name of Anizi, comes here to-morrow, in order to escort us," he wrote. "If Lady Hester succeeds in this undertaking, she will

* MS. letter, March 19th, 1813.

† *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, pp. 320-1.

A Possible Arab Lover

151

at least have the merit of being the first European female who has ever visited this once celebrated city. Who knows but she may prove another Zenobia, and be destined to restore it to its ancient splendour? Perhaps she may form a matrimonial connection with Ebn Secood, the great chief of the Wahabees. He is not represented as a very lovable object, but, making love subservient to ambition, they may unite their arms together, bring about a great revolution both in religion and politics, and shake the throne of the Sultan to its very centre." *

The reception of Lady Hester at Palmyra was perhaps the most triumphant incident in her Eastern career, and a full and melodramatic account of it occurs in a ponderous letter which Dr. Meryon wrote to the Marquis of Sligo from Latakia on June 22nd, 1813. The letter was never sent; but another, revised by Lady Hester, was dispatched in its place.†

"I had the honour of writing to your Lordship from Smyrna in the month of January, 1811, giving you a short account of the melancholy event of our shipwreck. That event has been succeeded by others of a much more pleasing nature; and were I to relate to you the occurrences of the last sixteen months, the curiosity and wonder of the Mussulmans, both in Egypt and Syria (but more especially in the latter country), to see the niece of the Grand Vizier of England, and the honours which have everywhere been paid her, I should give your Lordship as much pleasure as you must have suffered pain when the danger she had been in was made known to you. But it would be running into too great a length if I were to attempt to describe all this. I shall, therefore, confine myself to what most of all reflects lustre on the character of Lady Hester Stanhope, both as displaying a striking proof of the personal courage for which she is so remarkable, inasmuch as she dared to undertake what most of our English gentlemen travellers have been deterred from; and also

* "Travels," vol. ii., p. 177.

† Compare this letter with the one in the "Travels," vol. ii., pp. 253-9, which Lady Hester sent to Lord Sligo.

as setting her name in the first rank among those who have made researches into the manners of uncivilised nations. I allude to her journey to Palmyra and her visit to the tents of the Bedouin Arabs.

"When her Ladyship was at Damascus she consulted the best-informed people of that place, and more particularly the minister of the Pacha, a Jew, and a man of the highest talents, what was the best way of visiting those celebrated ruins. It was shown to her that there were two ways that were feasible—either to disguise herself and her suite in mean dresses, and accompany some armed caravan, or else to accept the offer, which he was authorised from the Pacha, his master, to make her, of an escort which might be supposed to be a match for the plundering parties of Bedouin Arabs that were accustomed to scour the desert. At the same time, he gave her to understand that the Emir Mahannah, prince of the Bedouins, was in no sort of subjection to the Porte, and that the inhabitants of Tadmur (as Palmyra is called by the Arabs) were completely out of the reach of the arm of justice in case they should make use of any foul play against her person. That, should it once be known who it was they had among them, they might be tempted to make her prisoner, from the hopes of an immense ransom, and that, though he would take every measure in his power to secure her safety, he yet could not be responsible for it.

"Lady Hester is not to be deterred by common difficulties. The Pacha's escort was accepted, and arrangements were made for setting off in the month of September, it being then the end of August. In the meantime the news had got into the desert that an English princess, who rode upon a mare of forty purses, whose stirrups were of gold, and to whom the treasurer of the English Sultan told out every day a thousand sequins, was about to pay a visit to Tadmur; that she had in her possession a book which instructed her where treasures were to be found (this book was Wood and Dawkins's plates), and that she had a small bag of the leaves of a certain herb which could convert antique stones into gold. Upon the strength of this report Prince Mahannah sent his eldest son, Nasar, to Damascus. On his arrival he desired to see her Ladyship. He asked her if it was true that she proposed passing through the territories of his father. She told him

she did. He then complained of the injustice she did the Bedouins in supposing that it was necessary to take an armed force with her. 'To a personage like you,' he said, 'the road is open wherever you choose to go. We know what is due to an illustrious princess. Our profession, it is true, is robbery; but we plunder those only who come armed against us. Towards those who claim the rights of hospitality from us we know how to exercise them.'

"The person of Nasar is extremely engaging; his manners are amiable, and he is eloquent in the highest degree. Instead of the ferocious animals she had been taught to expect, her Ladyship saw in the Bedouins a well-bred people, apparently dignified in their sentiments, and who, in bidding her repose confidence in them, knew how to inspire it. They were dismissed with presents, and the fruits of their embassy were a resolution on the part of Lady Hester Stanhope to refuse the escort of the Pacha as too expensive, and to trust to their honour for her safety. Between Damascus and Aleppo there is a large town, seated upon the Orontes, called Hamah. It skirts the desert, and is the rendezvous of the Bedouins, who resort to it to buy cloths and other necessaries. It was the plan of her Ladyship to pass the winter there, as the season was far advanced, and in the spring to perform the journey. She signified to Nasar that she should leave Damascus in October, and that when within a few leagues of Hamah she should advise his father of it; who thereupon, she expected, would remove his tents as near to the skirts as possible. That she then would go one day's journey into the desert unaccompanied, and would have a conference with him. Mr. Bruce, all this time, was at Aleppo. On the 15th of November she set off, leaving me behind at Damascus. She had with her her servants, a janissary, and an interpreter; and in this unprotected state, to the utter astonishment of the towns and villages through which she passed, she turned off from the high road, and arrived at the tents of the Anizis, the general name which all the tribes have that own Mahannah for their chief. This aged warrior, when he saw a fair and elegant woman who had ventured upon those wastes where many a man has trembled to go, where hunger and thirst are the lot of those who are the most fortunate, and where he knew she had been taught to expect nothing but

brutality, looked on her with admiration, and conceived for her a paternal affection which, united with the respect she afterwards, by her manners, inspired in him, I believe was the guarantee of our subsequent safety. Lady Hester told him who and what she was, why she came, and what she was going to see. 'In the spring,' she said, 'I shall trust myself among you again. If either now or then you should turn traitors, and seize upon my person, do not imagine I will ever suffer myself to be ransomed, or that you will be benefited by your treachery. If I feared slavery or death I should not thus boldly tell you, in this place, that I despised it.' The prince swore to be loyal to her, and his eldest son conducted her back in safety to Hamah.

"The winter proved unusually severe, with much snow, and it was not until the month of March that the weather was mild enough to prosecute the journey. During all this time the necessary preparations had been made under her Ladyship's eye, and every difficulty that a provident mind could foresee was guarded against, even down to spare horse-shoes. Forty camels were hired—eight for water, twelve for corn for the horses, others for the tents, luggage, etc., and the rest for flour, hard biscuits, tobacco, and, in a word, for the provisions. We were fifteen persons. Each was well mounted, provided with a leather water-bottle, a small pair of saddle wallets for his bread and a few raisins, and had secreted about his person a few sequins in case of losing company or otherwise quitting the party. All were in the costume of the Bedouins, the most remarkable part of which is a tanned sheepskin pelisse, very picturesque and very comfortable.

"In the middle of March Nasar was sent for, and came to Hamah, bringing with him a dozen sheiks or chieftains as the bodyguard of her Ladyship. Their long lances plumed with ostrich feathers, their curling hair hanging in ringlets down their faces, their gay coloured silk handkerchiefs which they draw across their mouths like vizors, their lean mares, their everything, was novel, and set the fancy to work in imagining what we were going to see. Two days after their arrival, at about ten in the morning, we set off. Thousands of spectators lined the roads for half a league out of the town, and a body of Janissaries, whom the governor had sent to march before her for a short

distance, had much ado to clear the way. • By degrees the mob was left behind, and we entered upon the plains, where the utmost eternal solitude that reigns made a striking contrast with the gay scene we had just left. Three days brought us to the tents of Mahannah, which were pitched near one of those wells that from the times of Abraham seem to have existed in the desert. They supply a brackish water, which necessity alone can make palatable. Her Ladyship reposed here one day. She received the visits, and I may say the homage, of the chief sheiks, and, having made them presents suitable to their respective situations, she continued her way, her guard having been increased by other horsemen and a few men on foot, and especially by a tall black slave, a fellow of known courage, whose charge was that of sentry at the tent door of Lady Hester, and whose scowling looks and tremendous battleaxe (his only weapon) almost inspired terror in those he was destined to protect.

“The Anizis are at war with the Faydans, certain tribes that live in that part of the desert that borders on the Euphrates. These latter were known to have some strong parties abroad, and there was every reason to believe that, could they get information of our route, they would certainly attack us. Nasar’s attention, therefore, was directed to the order of our march. Soon after daybreak, the tents being struck and the camels loaded, Lady Hester and her guard took the head, whilst Mr. Bruce and the armed servants covered the caravan. Scouts were sent out ahead of us and on the two wings to reconnoitre the country, and though we sometimes lost sight of them for hours, and though there are no beaten paths in the desert, yet they were sure to rejoin us when they had news to communicate, accustomed, as they are, to certain landmarks which are known to nobody but themselves. To pass the time, the Bedouin horsemen performed sham fights. Throwing off the handkerchief that covers their head, and letting their long hair fly dishevelled in the wind, they rested their lances, and, setting up a war whoop, drove full speed on their adversaries. These skilfully avoid the attack, and by a short turn gain the upper hand, and themselves become the assailants. When they had tired themselves, two bards—who were a part of the suite of the prince’s son—would recite pieces of poetry, which, though not understood by us, yet,

156 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

when we observed the effect it had on the Bedouins, manifested in the emotions displayed in their countenances, did not fail to be entertaining.

"It was on the second day after quitting the tents of Mahannah that we were gratified with the sight of a tribe on their march in search of pasture. This is the most pleasing spectacle that the desert has to show. The line of march consisted of about a thousand camels loaded with the tents, women, and household utensils, whilst the face of the country for more than a league was absolutely covered with herds of camels. It proved to be the tribe of the Sebahs (or Lions), tributaries of Mahannah, and who had come from the interior. Nothing could equal their singular appearance—so meagre, so skinny, and so unlike any race of human beings we had ever seen. Their dress was more ragged than beggars, for where are they to find clothes who never had seen a town? Their long, curly hair and the tattooed faces of their women excited as much wonderment in us as our whiter faces did in them. For never had they seen Franks, nor did they conceive it possible that there were nations who did not understand Arabic. The women rode in a species of palanquin shaped like the skull and horns of a ram. The horns were ornamented with gaudy pendants of worsted, whilst the section of the skull formed the seat or saddle on the back of the camel. Most of their mares were without saddles, and a hair rope served for a bridle.

"Quitting these, we now had to expect nothing but enemies before us. But fortune favoured us, and we saw none worse than eagles, antelopes, and hyenas, with which the desert swarms. We crossed the White Mountain that overhangs a sandy plain to the west of Palmyra, and, having traversed the plain, we were straining our eyes to get the first glimpse of the ruins, when a troop of horsemen, covered with clouds of dust, came galloping towards us, kettledrums beating and colours flying. They were the Palmyrenes, who, having got information of her Ladyship's approach, had come out to welcome her. They were accompanied by about fifty men on foot, who, naked down to the waist, without shoes, stockings or breeches, and covered only with a sort of antique petticoat, ran by their side and kept pace with them. Two belts, studded with blackamoor's teeth,

to which were suspended their powder flasks and cartouche boxes, crossed their shoulders, and formed a curious contrast with their tanned bodies. Their matchlocks were slung across their backs. They are skilful in the use of firearms, being hunters by profession, and constantly carrying on a petty warfare with the Bedouins, who, upon the least dispute, endeavour to revenge themselves upon the caravans that go from Palmyra to Hamah, to Bagdad, and other places with salt.

"No sooner had they joined us than they displayed before us a mock attack and defence of a caravan in the desert, between the Bedouins and themselves. Each party, anxious to distinguish itself in the eyes of the English princess, who was to be the rewarder of the most skilful, fought with an inconceivable fury. Many were the severe pokes the poor footmen got from the lances of the Arabs, and, in return, many a bruise did they receive from the stones that were hurled at them by the Palmyrenes. Some were stripped and plundered, and no English valet de chambre can undress his master quicker than a Bedouin can strip his enemy. This continued until we entered the Valley of Tombs, when such a sight burst upon our view as left no room for other thoughts. (Mausoleums, colonnades, arches, temples—all rose in confusion before our eyes, and the soul was filled with wonder and delight! We were led up through the long colonnade, which, by a reference to the plates of Wood and Dawkins, your Lordship will see, is terminated by a beautiful triumphal arch.* Each pillar of the colonnade, to the right and the left, at about the height of six feet from the ground, has got a projecting pedestal (which, I think, architects call a console). Over each of them is a Greek or Palmyrene inscription, and upon each there stood a statue, of which now no vestige remains, excepting the marks of the cramp-irons for the feet. Upon these pedestals, immediately before arriving at the Arch of Triumph, the most beautiful girls of the place, selected for that purpose, had been planted, with garlands in their hands, and in the most graceful postures, their elegant shapes being but slightly concealed by a single loose robe girded at the waist with a zone. On each side of the arch other girls, no less lovely, stood by threes and

* The plate referred to is given (much reduced) at p. 158. The consoles, on which stood the girls, can be clearly seen.

158 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

threes, whilst a row of six was ranged across the gate of the arch, bearing thyrsuses in their hands. As her Ladyship advanced, the living statues remained immovable on their pedestals. When she had passed, they leaped on the ground, and joined in a dance by her side. At last she came under the triumphal arch, where, all being united together, formed a circle, and, the men and the maids intermixed, they danced around her, singing by turns in her praise, whilst all the spectators joined in chorus. The sight was interesting, and I never saw one that moved my feelings more. From the colonnade to the Temple of the Sun is a distance of a quarter of a mile. Two rows of spectators lined the road, and Lady Hester passed between them to the mud cottage that was prepared for her reception in the north-west angle of the temple.

"For what we saw, my Lord, at Palmyra I beg to refer you to the work of our two countrymen, Wood and Dawkins, for whose correctness and general fidelity all who have been there will vouch. Fifty years have made little difference in the appearance of the ruins,* excepting that a few columns, then standing, are now fallen to the ground. Her Ladyship visited everything, climbing up into places almost inaccessible to a woman. She makes us laugh exceedingly at her description of the Fountain Ephca, the warm, sulphurous spring. On the morning of the wedding night a Palmyrene bride, nowadays, goes and washes herself at the fountain head. A wedding happened during our stay there, and Lady Hester went to view the washing ceremony, at which, to do her honour, more folks than ordinary assisted. The spring issues from a vaulted grotto out of a low arch in a smart stream about two and a half feet deep. Out of this arch the Arab women and girls came swimming and floundering in strings of a dozen, one after the other, stark naked. Indeed, it costs them but little pain to put themselves in a state of nature, seeing that they wear only a single covering, something like India spotted silk handkerchiefs, which, as being next the skin, might as well be called shift as robe.

"How long we should have remained at Palmyra I cannot say, had not a circumstance somewhat hurried our departure.

* These plates were published in 1753, sixty years before the visit of Lady Hester.



From the engraving of H. C. L. 1850, 1851, 1852.

VIEW OF PALMYRA, SHOWING THE SITE OF LADY HEPHER'S ENTRY

The consoles on which the young girls stood are plainly visible. (Vol. IV, p. 102.)

Four Bedouins of the Faydans had come for some sinister purpose into the environs of Palmyra, where they lay concealed. The want of water obliged them to leave their hiding-place to drink at the spring, which is at a distance of about a mile from the Temple of the Sun, within the precincts of which, it has already been said, the Arab huts are all built. It happened, however, that four of our Bedouins had strayed that way upon the look out, and, spying these men, pursued them, stripped them, and brought them naked into the village. How they obtained a superiority over them I cannot say and did not hear. They were known to be Faydans, and Nasar ordered them into confinement. In the night two of them eluded the vigilance of their guard, and escaped. When Nasar heard of it he raved like a madman, and could with difficulty be prevented from taking the life of the sheik or chief of Palmyra. He immediately waited on Lady Hester, told her what had happened, and said that these men, no doubt, would make the best of their way to their tribe and give information of her being with him, and of the rich booty that was to be made. He therefore prayed her to depart for Hamah as quickly as possible, for if a party stronger than we were should, by forced marches, overtake us, we must inevitably fall into their hands. Lady Hester fixed on the following day, although she strongly suspected the whole to be a trick invented for the purpose of shortening her stay. Before going, curious to know what sort of people the Faydans were, she sent her interpreter to converse with the two who yet remained in custody. When these knew who the interpreter came from they said to him: 'Tell the English princess not to be alarmed lest our people should overtake her in the desert. Her name has already come to the ears of the Emir of the Faydans, and wherever his subjects meet with her she will be respected. It is our deadly enemies, the Anizis, he seeks, but you he sets upon his head' (a figurative expression used in Arabia to denote an absolute devotion to the service of another). Lady Hester did not, however, think it proper to risk the life of Nasar and her guards, and the next day we departed. Her Ladyship's name was previously cut out in a conspicuous place as a memorial of her visit to future travellers. Our return was less agreeable than our going, as we were constantly in a state of alarm for fear

of being overtaken by the Faydans. Nothing, however, happened, and on the third day we reached the tribe of the Sebabs (who I have mentioned above), when we considered ourselves as in a place of safety, and halted a day to refresh the horses.

"During the interval that had elapsed between our going and returning, several tribes had assembled in the road it was supposed we should take, attracted by curiosity and, in some degree, by the hope of sharing in the presents which Lady Hester distributed to the most distinguished sheiks. Thus, from the tents of the Sebabs we passed to those of the Amours, whose chief, Ali Bussle, is renowned through Syria for the many plundering parties he has headed. His long white beard, his composed manner, and a certain dignified air, which, though common to the Arabs in general, is particularly striking in him, give the idea rather of a sage than a robber; and when he is seen sitting quietly in his tent it is with difficulty one can be persuaded that he is not calumniated. We next saw the Bennykalies, who formerly pastured on the shores of the Persian Gulf, as is mentioned by Niebuhr; the Hadidiens (or Tribe of Iron), who mount asses instead of horses, and make use of matchlocks; and some others, which I forbear to mention, as a mere catalogue of names can afford but little entertainment. All these emulated each other in the reception they gave her Ladyship. Some sent their finest palanquins for her to ride in; others sent her yasort and keimac, than which, your Lordship knows, the dairy can produce nothing better. The finest mutton was never wanting. For though the true Bedouins scorn to pasture anything but camels, there are certain bastard tribes, such as the Mowalies and a few more that we saw, which are mere graziers, and pay tribute for the protection that Prince Mahannah affords them. Several Arabs offered their mares, but always made it understood that they valued them at a price which the best racer in England would hardly fetch. The Bedouins, it must be allowed, are very mercenary, and strangely overrate the qualities of their beasts. But I shall not venture an opinion on that subject, as no doubt Lady Hester Stanhope will give your Lordship all the information you can desire.

"My letter has already run into an unpardonable length, and I hasten to its close. We arrived at Hamah just one month

from the day of leaving it, strongly convinced of the salubrity of the air of the desert, both from the excellent condition in which the horses were as also from the compliments paid us on our good looks. As the Arabs bear the highest respect to beards, Mr. Bruce and myself had suffered ours to grow from the period that the journey to Palmyra was first thought of, so that by this time they were of no inconsiderable length. Habit has rendered us so accustomed to the Eastern costume that with this addition to our chins it would be difficult to distinguish us from the inhabitants of the country; and as for her Ladyship, from her great aptitude for everything, she could parade all the mosques in the Ottoman dominions without being detected.

"I have only one word more to trouble you with. In the very circumstantial account that Wood and Dawkins give of Palmyra and its environs, they say nothing of a cave that is found somewhat more than two leagues to the north, at the foot of a chain of mountains that bounds the plain in that direction. Other more serious occupations engaging her attention, she sent me there to examine it; and I went, escorted by thirty armed men, who, for a trifling consideration, agreed to conduct me, as they are able to pay themselves well by the sale of the minerals which they bring away. On our way I saw the quarry from which Palmyra was built. Huge masses of stone, hewn ready for transportation, are lying in it; and in other parts the regular faces of the rock plainly demonstrate it to have been the grand quarry. It is about a league and a quarter from the ruins. When we had arrived at the cave, we stripped ourselves to the shirt and drawers, and, each furnished with a flambeau, followed our guides. The mouth of the cave is, perhaps, thirty feet in breadth and of ten or twelve in height. It continues of these dimensions for a short distance, when two shafts go off in opposite directions, one of which we entered by a hole through which we crept on our bellies. The shaft seems to have been thus choked up by the falling-in of the rock, for within it assumed a tolerably regular vaulted shape. Parallel to it ran another shaft of similar shape and dimensions, and we crawled from one to another through holes that were made in what might be called the wall of separation of the two. Through its whole length almost, both from its sides and its arched roof, projected a beautiful

efflorescence, perfectly resembling tufts of white floss silk, which, from its taste when applied to the tongue and from the uses to which the Arabs put it, I suspect to be ——. * The heat was so suffocating that I could not remain long in. We next visited the shaft in the opposite direction. It was less deep and more irregular than the first. In this the roof caught fire wherever a taper was applied to it: an experiment I did not choose to see repeated a third time for fear of suffocation from sulphurous fumes, for the rock abounded with native sulphur. The Palmyrenes filled their bags with the ——, † and I furnished myself with such specimens as I thought would be useful. We then returned to Palmyra.

"Thus, my Lord, I have endeavoured to put you in possession of some of the circumstances of our journey. The rest I have omitted for fear of being tedious.

"Her Ladyship has still the same good health she enjoyed at Constantinople. She is not at all alarmed about the plague, although raging furiously so near us as Tripoli, Beirut, and Sayda. Mr. Bruce has totally lost that sickness of stomach to which formerly he was so subject. Two years ago he brought up every meal he ate, which for the last eight months has not once happened to him. His cure has been chiefly owing to a total abstinence from wine, spices, and stimulants, of which he made much too free a use. There is not now a healthier man in all England.

"I have the honour to be, my Lord, with the greatest respect, your Lordship's most obedient and very humble servant,

"CHS. LEWIS MERYON."

* Alum (word erased).

† Alum (word erased).

‡ MS. letter of June 22nd, 1813.

CHAPTER XX

DEPARTURE OF MICHAEL BRUCE

LADY HESTER wrote of her triumphs to Henry Williams Wynn, from Latakia, on June 30th, 1813 :

"Without joke, I have been crowned Queen of the Desert, under the triumphal arch at Palmyra. Nothing could succeed better than this journey, dangerous as it was, for upon our return we were pursued by two hundred of the enemy's horse, but escaped from them. They were determined to have the head of the chief who accompanied us, yet sent me in secret an ambassador to say that I need not fear anything—that everything belonging to me should be respected : such were the orders given to this powerful tribe by five of their chiefs assembled at Bagdad. . . . They all paid me homage. If I please, I can now go to *Mecca* alone—I have nothing to fear. I shall soon have as many names as Apollo. I am the Pearl, the Lion, the Sun, the Star, the Light from Heaven. . . . I am quite wild about the people, and all Syria is in astonishment at my courage and success.

"To have spent a month with some thousands of Bedouin Arabs is no common thing. For three days they plagued me sadly, and all the party, excepting Bruce, almost insisted upon returning. The servants were frightened out of their wits, their eyes always fixed on their arms or upon me. The dragoman could not speak—he had quite lost his head. All the people immediately about me were *chosen* rascals, and, having primed a fellow who was once with the French army in Egypt, I rode dash into the middle of them ; I made my speech—that is to say, I acted, and the man spoke. It so surprised and charmed them

164 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

that they all became as harmless as possible, and here ended all unpleasant scenes. . . . Nobody must ever give an opinion of the charms of the desert who has not seen 1,500 camels descend the mountains into an enchanting vale, and a tribe of Arabs pitch their tents upon beds of flowers of ten thousand hues, bringing with them hundreds of living creatures only a few days old—children, lambs, kids, foals, young camels, and puppies.” *

To Canning she wrote also from Latakia :

“The English world are about as good-natured as I believed them to be; to ridicule a person said to be starving in a burning desert is very charitable, but, poor souls, their imagination is as miserable as their humanity is bounded, for it never, I suppose, entered their heads that I carried everything before me, and was crowned under the triumphal arch at Palmyra, pitched my tent amidst thousands of Arabs, and spent a month with these very interesting people. . . .” †

There is a short note, dated July 15th, 1813, on the same subject, to General Oakes, informing him that her journey into the desert was “considered as the most extraordinary ever made in this country. All those who know the Arabs only wonder we ever returned safe.” After her experiences at Palmyra, which for an Englishwoman and for 1812 were certainly remarkable—she went by slow stages towards the sea-coast.

Leaving Hamah on May 10th she arrived at Latakia on the 22nd.

“Lady Hester and Mr. Bruce,” wrote Dr. Meryon, “established themselves in the house prepared for them, and I in a small one which had been hired for me. . . . The house which

* “*Diaries of a Lady of Quality from 1797-1844.*” By Frances Williams Wynn, 1864, pp. 325-7. (By kind permission of Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.)

† “*Life of Stratford Canning.*” by Stanley Lane Poole, 1888, vol. i., p. 120. (By kind permission of Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.)

Lady Hester occupies at present has cost her, for the hire of three months, about £80, whereas an inhabitant would have it for £20 a year. She has the reputation of being immensely rich, and wherever she goes this entails on her much expense which a less noble personage might avoid—and not only entails on her, but on those with her also.

"I am inclined to think we shall embark from Latakia either for Russia, by the way of the Black Sea, or else for Malta. We have seen enough of the Turks, and shall leave them without regret." *

It was Lady Hester's plan to leave Syria at this time. The plague was raging all over the country.

"We shall get away from hence," she wrote to General Oakes, in the note of July 15th, 1813, "as soon as we can get a good passage, either in a ship of war or in a ship of the country, when no longer infected by the plague; but they are not safe just now, nor is this good weather up here: the heat is so great at sea and there are frequent calms." †

Until the beginning of June Latakia itself had been free from the scourge, but during July and August it was not so healthy. Anxious as Lady Hester was to leave, certain difficulties prevented her departure. For one thing, she had nineteen horses in her stables, and did not know how to dispose of them. She was restless and undecided. While ostensibly planning to go to Europe, she was actually in communication with the Wahabite Chief concerning a visit she desired to pay to his capital at Derayah, for her lively imagination had been stirred by accounts of marvellous dromedaries, swifter than horses, spacious palaces, superb robes, and beautiful wives. She was occupied, too, by applications from diverse people who, trading on her supposed influence and power, approached her with

* MS. letter, Latakia, June 12th, 1813.

† *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, p. 322.

166 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

all sorts of supplications and petitions addressed to the gracious Milédi Stanhope and Monsieur Bruce.

The following extract, translated from a letter written by Catafago, a rich Greek at Nazareth, to Dr. Meryon on June 8th, 1813, will serve as an example of the manner in which local people regarded the standing of Lady Hester and Mr. Bruce.

"I have had the pleasure of recently receiving a letter from M. Pisani, head interpreter of the English Legation at Constantinople," he wrote. "I am enclosing you a copy of it so that you may see, sir, that I have begun to enjoy the sweet results of the generous and effectual protection of Milédi Stanhope and Monsieur Bruce."

He then begged Milédi Stanhope and Monsieur Bruce to be so kind as to write to Pisani to ask the latter to help him to protect himself against Malagamba, the English agent at Acre, who was making himself troublesome, and continued :

"I have for this reason written to Milédi Stanhope and to Monsieur Bruce to beg them to provide me with this letter of recommendation, if my request meets with their approbation ; and, if the contrary should be the case, to have the kindness to suggest to me some other means which they may consider more certain and more effectual still in enabling me to attain my wishes." *

The unrest which possessed Lady Hester was connected with Bruce. Both had grown disillusioned. Passion had waned. There were grave faults of character in each. Bruce was vain and arrogant ; Lady Hester was impetuous, and strongly resented interference with her freedom. There is no record of a quarrel, nothing to show how the

* From one of several similar letters written in French in the possession of the author.

end came. The attachment was probably not deep on either side. Bruce's nature was fickle, as that of spoilt darlings is apt to be, and in Lady Hester the spirit of adventure was so pronounced that love played a secondary part.

It is safe to presume that Bruce had grown weary of Lady Hester's brilliant charms, tempered as they were by exactions. Her attitude was not so simple. She had schooled herself to regard the affair as an episode; she had always borne in mind that Bruce owed a duty to his father, and she still believed that he might make a career for himself in England. She had discovered, however, that the man in whom she had placed her unbounded faith was not likely to justify it fully, and she probably felt that she was not dependent on him for happiness, and that she could return to a single life as easily as she had left it. Yet the parting was a great wrench to both, as such partings must be to people of their temperament. Natures such as theirs could not remain calm under stress. Both cried out, and though Bruce was afterwards easily consoled, and Lady Hester brought her pride to bear in concealing her suffering, it is a fact that from the day of his departure she was a changed woman.

Early in October, 1813, Bruce received letters informing him that his father's health was in a bad state, and advising him to return home at once. He set off immediately. Dr. Meryon announced the news abruptly in a letter dated from Latakia on October 25th: "Mr. Bruce is no longer with us. He departed from Latakia the 15th of this month for Constantinople by way of Aleppo—a journey of one month and ten days."

That both were unhappy is proved by Dr. Meryon's letter to the Marquis of Sligo a few weeks later.

"It is with great satisfaction that I learned yesterday from Lady Hester your Lordship's intended arrival at Malta, and

168 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

that there was some prospect of seeing you in this country. . . . Your presence would be particularly acceptable at a moment like the present, as I think your society, for how ever a short time, would cheer up and do Lady Hester good, who has been a good deal affected of late by the departure of Mr. Bruce for England. From what I can understand, it was a letter from a friend of his father's which induced Lady Hester to insist on his return, which mentioned his health being impaired and his being out of spirits. Nothing could have induced Mr. Bruce to have gone but his implicit obedience to her wishes. He was so amazingly affected at taking leave that I was afraid he would have retracted his intentions at the last moment.

"We have been six months in this place, surrounded on all sides by the plague, which still commits ravages in the interior, but has for some time past left the coast. Mr. Bruce went from hence about five weeks since, intending to go by land through the heart of Asia Minor, as there were so few opportunities by sea, owing to the plague being upon the coast. Her Ladyship's anxiety about him is augmented, as she learns it still continues in some of the large towns of Asia Minor that it would be difficult for him to avoid. In a few days Lady Hester leaves this place for her residence at the foot of Mount Lebanon, near Sayda, where she intends to pass the winter; as for her future plans, I know nothing about them, and you will probably hear them from herself. . . .

"It has pleased God that her health has stood out against the various fatigues she has gone through, not only of body, but of mind, but I am in considerable anxiety about the fate of this winter." *

The Doctor's fears proved to be prophetic. Lowered in vitality, lonely and sorrowing, Lady Hester was fit prey for the ravages of the prevailing disease. In his next letter to Lord Sligo Meryon informed the Marquis that she lay at death's door.

"My LORD,—By the letter I had the honour of writing your Lordship in the course of this month, I informed you how much

* MS. letter, December, 1813.

I dreaded the effects of this winter on account of Lady Hester. My apprehensions were but too well founded. Fifteen days ago her Ladyship was seized with an inflammatory fever, which fell upon her brain and rendered her for five days delirious. To this succeeded a most deplorable state of debility, the more difficult to extricate her from as it was accompanied by an affection of the chest, which rendered her incapable of taking any nourishment but asses' milk. In this situation, myself and the medical gentleman whose assistance I had obtained despaired of her life, and Mr. Barker, the Consul of Aleppo, who is residing at Latakia, had performed the melancholy office of sealing her papers and putting a last hand to her affairs. By the blessing of the Almighty, however, a favourable change took place; a diet consisting entirely of asses' milk by degrees restored her strength, sleep returned, and on the 28th we were enabled to pronounce her out of danger. She now continues mending daily, and we trust in about ten days will be enabled to prosecute her voyage by sea to her residence at the foot of Mount Lebanon.

"Great, however, have been the ravages that this illness has made in her looks, and it will be many months before her person can recover any of its *embonpoint*. But I esteem that as a secondary object, and look only to the restoration of her health and spirits. The sterility of the country is much against it, as it is difficult to find any of those delicacies that sick people like, and, though we would vary her diet, we nowhere find anything that's relishing. Your Lordship will, I am sure, readily pardon my troubling you, for I considered it my duty to give you a correct account of her Ladyship's illness, in order to prevent the effects of erroneous ones that will, without doubt, get abroad, and in which things will be represented worse than they really have been.

"There is no plague here, none at Tripoli and Beirut. In the interior it still infects some principal towns.

"I have the honour to be, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient and humble servant,

"C. L. M." *

* MS. letter of December, 1813.

170 **Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope**

A letter of about the same date informed Miss Elizabeth Williams of the bad news. Lady Hester had remained in communication with her former companion, whose projected marriage in Malta had for some unknown reason come to nought. It was not long before arrangements were made for Miss Williams to travel to the East and become a member of Lady Hester's household.

Dr. Meryon wrote to Miss Williams, at Malta, from Latakia, on December 2nd, 1813 :

"DEAR MISS WILLIAMS,—Knowing the great interest you take in Lady Hester's health and welfare, it would be unpardonable in me if I did not seize the first opportunity to communicate to you a recent illness which she has suffered, and which will, no doubt, be repeated in a variety of ways at Malta. A little more than a fortnight ago she was attacked with an inflammatory fever, which fell upon her brain and her chest, rendering her for six nights delirious and causing the greatest suffering from difficult respiration. Her life was despaired of, and I scarcely thought I should have the pleasure of writing you the consolatory news I now am able to send you. For after two days of the most imminent danger, the fever left her, and though she remained in a state of debility, the greatest you can conceive, yet since that day her health has mended, and our fears for her life are entirely over. Still, however, the greatest attention is required, as the smallest error in diet or medicine throws us back, and the strictest regimen and attention only brings her on slowly.

"In about a fortnight I hope she will be able to set out for the foot of Mount Lebanon, near Sayda, where she has fixed to remain for the winter.

"Lady Hester laments much to find that in all your letters you manifest a peevishness and discontentedness with your situation at Malta. You do wrong, for there is not a moment that she does not speak of you with the same tenderness and affection as if you were her child. If you dislike Malta, you can go to England, where you will be sure to find a respectable service, and there are your friends, Mr. Rice, Wilson, and Pocknell, where you always are sure of an asylum.

Slow Recovery

171

"As for your complaints that she does not write to you, she desires me to say you should consider that half the letters that are sent are lost on the way, and thus never reach you—and, besides, you know, there is another Miss Williams who gets hold of them and reads them, and thus renders it quite impossible to write with any confidence.

"As for myself, I hope, Miss Williams, to retain a place in your recollection as ever anxious to render you any service that may lie in my power.

"I remain, with great sincerity, yours most faithfully,

"C. L. M.

"Mr. Bruce has left for England, for his father's ill-health made him very anxious to see him, and Lady Hester insisted on his going."

Dr. Meryon addressed a letter to Bruce at Constantinople :

"Since the date of my last, written to you, I think, on the 29th of November, Lady Hester has been recovering slowly, and is still so very weak that it is totally impossible for her to write you a line herself—nay, almost to sit up in bed. Last night she slept five hours together, a very favourable symptom ; to-morrow, should her strength permit, she proposes going into the bath. She appears, in the meantime, very anxious about your speedy arrival in England, owing to your father's great anxiety to see you. Captain Macdonald has been here, and was very urgent to pay a visit to her Ladyship, saying he had a message from Mr. Crawford Bruce ; but this was out of the question, as he could be no confidential friend of your father's. He is the bearer of this, being again on his return to Constantinople, which he left a few weeks ago.

"I remain, dear sir, with the greatest respect, your most obedient and very faithful servant,

"C. L. MERYON." *

Before she regained her health Lady Hester wrote to Colonel Missett, the English resident at Alexandria, who

* MS. letter, December, 1813.

had asked whether Dr. Meryon could be spared to attend upon him. Dr. Meryon had himself been prostrated by the fever, as also had Lady Hester's maid, Mrs. Fry :

"I am incapable through illness of writing to you myself, therefore I must address you through the pen of the Doctor to account for his non-appearance. About a week after the time I mentioned he was ready to set off.

"Just when he was upon the point of setting off Mr. Barker's children fell dangerously ill of a malignant fever, and the poor man was in such distress that it would have been an act of the greatest inhumanity to have deprived him of succour at that moment. This detained him a long time, and it ended in two of the children dying in one day.

"I then proposed that the Doctor should accompany me by land as far as Sayda, as I intended to spend the winter in the neighbourhood of Lebanon, that he should then proceed to Acre and find a vessel to convey him to Egypt. Unfortunately, shortly after I fell ill myself of a most dreadful fever, in which I was given over for twenty-four hours. This detained me in bed forty-five days, and now I am in such a state of weakness that I cannot walk without the assistance of two persons, and that for five or ten minutes at a time. When I consider what I have gone through, it is only surprising to me that I am here at all. The Doctor himself has been ill, the dragoman has been ill, and my maid likewise, of fever in a slight degree. Under these circumstances you see that it is impossible for me to send the Doctor at this moment, and if I were to propose it to him I think he would strongly object to it. As soon as the wind changes to the north, I mean to be carried down, put into a boat, and conveyed to my new habitation, as the air of this place (at least this year) is prodigiously unwholesome. Myself as well as the Doctor are in daily expectation of a letter from Mr. Thurburn* to know the state of your health. Believe me that it cost me a great deal to detain the Doctor, for my anxiety about your recovery is not the least diminished, although, unfortunately, at this moment I have not in my power to do much to accelerate it.

* Colonel Minnett's secretary.

"Bruce has been gone eleven weeks. He was detained at Antioch, at Aleppo for mules, for guides, for Tartars, etc., and I suppose will be detained at every place on his way to Constantinople, and that he will be, in fact, longer going by land than if he had gone by sea to England. This distresses me a good deal, as I am afraid that if the winter is a hard one his father's health may break even more than he expects before he arrives." *

A reference to Bruce's return to England is made in a letter from the Princess of Wales to Lady Charlotte Bury: "I have heard that Mr. Crawford Bruce has left Lady Hester, and that he is expected every day in England; I have also been told that Lady Hester is now quite devoted to the French nation, and has given up the English for it."†—Saturday, October 31st [1813 ?].

Mr. Bruce, Senior, had recovered from his indisposition when his son returned. He did not die until March 31st, 1820.‡ Michael threw himself with energy into society life. In 1814 there was a suggestion that he should go back to Lady Hester, but nothing came of it. She wrote to General Oakes on April 25th, from Jaffa, that Bruce had written her that he had seen the General during his visit to England. She would not hear of his coming to Syria to fetch her or meeting her upon the Continent. His father, she said, had acted in such a half-and-half way that that alone would have deprived her of any real comfort in the connection, even if there had been no other reason for breaking it off. From the beginning she had not only told Bruce himself, but she had *solemnly assured* his father that she would never stand in the way of Michael's marriage, and

* From the Meryon MSS., dated December, 1813.

† Diary illustrative of times of George the Fourth (Lady Charlotte Bury's "Diary of a Lady in Waiting," vol. iv., p. 58). (Colburn, 1838.)

‡ "In Upper Grosvenor Street, Mr. Crawford Bruce, father of Michael Bruce," etc.—*The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1829, pt. i., vol. 90, p. 378.

that she would give him up when his travels were over. She had seen, alas, too much of the fatal consequences of young men being hampered with old women.

And then she unbosomed her feelings very freely to her old friend whom she knew she could trust, and in whom her faith was well justified. She had taken, it was true, she wrote, a very odd line in exposing herself in order to set Bruce's father's mind at rest, so that he might not suspect anything underhand about the business. She knew well enough that she could have brazened out the affair had she been so minded. She could simply have mixed up Bruce's name with the names of other young men who had joined her on her travels, and no one could then have guessed her secret. She might even have deceived her brother, as he was at such a distance, and like many other women who had acted in a like manner, she might still have kept herself up in the world. But she had thought first—not of herself, not even of Bruce—but of the feelings of an old man wrapped up in his son. And, acting thus, as she held, honourably, she had expected old Mr. Bruce to have had more consideration and more confidence in her than he had shown. "Now it is over," she added a little plaintively, "it is not worth talking about, and those who know me well know I am better able to make *great* sacrifices than little ones."

She told General Oakes that she hated and would always hate England, and that she would never have lived there again even if Bruce had been out of the question. She knew that she could find a home and friends in every country, and she bravely assured her friend that she had nothing to complain of, and especially where Bruce's relations to herself were concerned she had not a word to say against his conduct.

The passage of Lady Hester's correspondence which contains this striking revelation of her feelings was ignored by the Duchess of Cleveland in her biography, and it is

doubtful whether she even knew of it. She quoted an extract from the letter of which it is a part, but probably used the version printed in *The Monthly Magazine*, and did not trouble to look at the original.

Lady Hester's statement that she would never have lived in England again, even had Bruce been out of the question, must be taken with reserve. Her relations with him were known at home,* and it would have been well-nigh impossible for her to recover the reputation she had lost. Though she scorned the suggestion and no one troubled to contradict her, it may be regarded as certain that the chief reasons which kept her in the East were connected with Bruce. In 1816 Lady Hester heard with distress of Bruce's trial in the Lavalette case.† He was sentenced, with Sir Robert Wilson and Captain John Hely-Hutchinson, to three months' imprisonment in a Paris prison. The irrepressible young man appears to have suffered little from this adventure. He had many friends in Paris, Madame de St. Aignan Caulaincourt, the Princesse de Vaudemont, the Duchesse de St. Leu, the Princesse de la Moskowa (Marshal Ney's widow), and other high-born dames amongst them. On his return to England he continued his career as a lady-killer (according to Lady Charlotte Bury's account), and on August 15th, 1818, he married Marianne, daughter of Sir George Dallas and widow of Sir Peter Parker.‡ His later doings in no way affected Lady Hester, and there is no further mention of him in her life.§

* See the letter from "Monk" Lewis, quoted at p. 105.

† For Lady Hester's note on this affair see p. 226, where she refers to it in a letter to James Silk Buckingham. For Sir Robert Wilson's account see *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1816, vol. 86, pp. 645-6.

‡ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1818, vol. 88, p. 178.

§ In 1818 he was a member of the famous Rota Club, to which Hobhouse, Douglas Kinnaird and Scrope Davis belonged. In 1821 he entered at Lincoln's Inn. He had one son, Michael, and he died on November 4th, 1867, at Bognor.—*The Times*, November 6th, 1861, p. 1.

No sooner was Lady Hester well enough to be moved than she decided to set out for Sayda.

"In about a week," she had written to Canning from Latakia before her illness, "I repair to a pretty convent at the foot of Lebanon for the winter. The Pacha of Acre is come into that neighbourhood to repair a castle, and the Prince of the Druses hunts within an hour of my habitation, so I shall often see him. We are great friends, he is a very agreeable man, and very popular in the Mountain. I am quite at home all over the country; the common people pay me the same sort of respect as they do a great Turk, and the great men treat me as if I was one of them. In short, I am very comfortable in my own odd way; part of this country is divine, and I always find something to amuse and occupy my mind. Now the good people of England may imagine me forlorn and miserable; they are very welcome. I would not change my philosophical life for their empty follies." *

Three months of sickness intervened between this letter and the actual departure, and a very different Lady Hester it was who set forth to a new home.

Weak in health, broken in spirit, feeling herself more or less abandoned by her lover and her friends, and temporarily subdued by her various trying experiences, she shut herself up and for a time lived a secluded life.†

* "Life of Stratford Canning," by Stanley Lane Poole, 1888, vol. i., p. 121. (By kind permission of Messrs. Longmans, Green and Co.)

† It may be objected that there is not sufficient proof of the fact that Lady Hester's illness and the great change in herself that followed it was due in the first place to Bruce's departure. But a passage from John Macdonald's "Journey through Asia Minor, Armenia and Koordistan in 1813 and 1814" (London: Murray, 1818, p. 162) shows how closely the events were connected. "Captain Macdonald (Kinneir) arrived at Latakia a day or two after the commencement of Lady Hester's illness," wrote Dr. Meryon ("Travels," vol. ii., p. 295), "Lady Hester Stanhope, and her physician, Mr. Merion, whose attention to me during my illness will never be forgotten," wrote Macdonald, "were then also residing at Latakia: my friend Mr. Bruce had only a few days before set out on his return to Europe."



EMIR BESHYR (c. 1760-1851).
Prince of the Druses.

CHAPTER XXI

MAR ELIAS (1814), LADY HESTER *intime*

EARLY in January Lady Hester was well enough to travel, and by painful and slow degrees reached Sayda. The Convent of Mar Elias, which she had chosen for her residence, was on the summit of a small mountain, the road leading to it being so steep that asses were best fitted to clamber up it. There were no neighbours of any consequence. "There is a small village half a mile off," wrote Dr. Meryon, "but it consists wholly of poor miserable peasants who come every now and then out of curiosity to stare at the Franks and the English Sultan's daughter, the name Lady Hester generally goes by." *

Many repairs had to be made before the convent was inhabitable, and although Lady Hester, owing to her state of health, had little inclination for business, she was obliged to turn her thoughts to practical things. The following letters, dictated by her in French † and dealing with petty details, bring to light a phase of her character which is not shown by her more studied correspondence.

To M. Louis Bertrand, ‡ at Dayr el Kamar:

Le 15 Janvier, 1814, Sayde.

"MONSIEUR,—Milédi Hester Stanhope m'a chargé de vous remercier pour avoir surveillé le travail à couvent de St. Elias.

* MS. letter, December 31st, 1813.

† "Her Ladyship's French was sometimes worded without much regard to genders and tenses, although in her expressions nobody could be happier," wrote Meryon in the "Memoirs," vol. iii., p. 15.

‡ A dragoman.

178 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

Je dois, cependant, vous fait marquer que les dernières pluies ont passé les terraces et ont pénétré dans les trois grandes chambres, chose très essentielle à laquelle Mr. A. B. n'a pas fait attention quoiqu'il étoit sur les lieux. La citerne du bain en outre a une voie d'eau qu'on suppose être au fond du chaudron de cuivre; puisque d'eau qu'on verse dedans coule toute de suite par en bas. Ce qui a obligé Milédi d'envoyer un homme du métier pour le defaire et le refaire bientôt pour sur ou il est fautif.

"Milédi presente ses respects au Prince Beshyr en demandant des nouvelles de sa santé et elle le prie de donner ordre à ses gens lui envoyer aussitot qu'il sera possible une anesse jeune, saine, sans maladie sans tache, qui a fait son poulain recemment et qui est capable de fournir deux goblets de lait par jour. Vous aurez la bonté de traiter pour le prix de louage avec le propriétaire vous meme. L'état de sa santé l'a rendu incapable de prendre presque tous les aliments nourissans, à cause de la chaleur qu'ils lui donnent interieurement; et ce n'est que le lait d'anesse qui, en même tems la fortifie sans exciter en elle aucune sensation fiévreuse. C'est pourquoi qu'après qu'elle sera à Abra elle compte du faire du lait d'anesse sa nourriture." *

Five days later Lady Hester wrote to M. Catafago of Acre :

"Vous avez sans doute entendre parler de ma cruelle maladie qui m'a réduit à l'extrémité pour 130 heures. Quand j'avois commencé à me retablir elle a été suivi d'une fièvre tierce qui a encore réduit mes forces. Mais, grace à Dieu, à present j'ai peu de chose à me plaindre excepté une grande foiblesse et surtout dans les genoux qui m'empêche de marcher.

"Dans cette état ce que je prend c'est de lait d'anesse, un petit morceau d'agneau que suce, et de bien petits poulets simplement cuits. Voilà ma nourriture. En arrivant ici j'ai fait presenter ma bujourdo au vieux Motsellim, en lui disant que je serois bien aise, comme ces choses étoient difficiles à trouver, qu'il voulait avoir la bonté d'exercer son pouvoir de tacher les

* From Dr. Meryon's MSS.

procurer pour moi, et de m'envoyer un peu de blé, de charbon et de bois et jusqu'à ce que j'avois arrangé ma famille de manière d'être capable d'envoyer le seul domestique que j'ai qui est capable de provisionner une famille et de chercher par ici et par là ce dont j'ai besoin ; car dans ce moment je ne peux par le laisser s'absenter d'être auprès de moi parceque je n'ai aucun drogué-man, et c'est le seul homme qui scait parler le François. Car mon drogué-man n'est pas encore venu, ayant des affaires à Tripoli and à Bairout. Je suis venu me reposer dans la maison de Damiani me trouvant trop faible. Depuis quatre jours qu'il restoit Motsellim après mon arrivé il m'envoyait une peu de vache, et de bois et de charbons pour deux jours—et manquant de nourriture convenable pour une malade j'ai eu une fois une petite attaque de fièvre." *

Two other letters written by Lady Hester in February, in her schoolgirlish French, with an utter disregard of accents, refer to her illness, to the departure of Mr. Bruce and to the repairs she had made at the convent.

From Lady Hester Stanhope at Mar Elias to Maalem Aziz at Cairo :

Feb. 4th, 1814.

"C'est avec le plus grand plaisir que j'ai appris depuis peu vous allez marier votre jolie fille, et je vous en fais mon compliment. Je regrette beaucoup que ce n'est pas dans mon pouvoir de lui envoyer le cadeau que je lui avois promis, mais il faut d'abord quitter ce pays ci. En attendant je vous envoie deux barriques de vin blanc et un rouge et deux boites de beccafignes, que j'ai destiné pour vous pour long temps. Mais une fièvre qui m'a réduit à l'extrémité, m'avoit empêché de rien faire pour quelques mois. Graces à Dieu, je commence à reprendre un peu les forces, et je viens m'établir dans un petit couvent au pied de Mt. Libon en attendant qu'il vient un bâtiment Anglois. Mais il paroît qu'il ne viendra pas pour long temps c'est que la peste on dit a commencer à se montrer encore dans ce pays ci. Il y a quatre mois que Mr. Bruce m'a quitté pour aller en Angleterre

* From Dr. Meryon's MSS.

180 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

par Vienne, ayant reçu des nouvelles que son pere etoit malade. Il a preferé ce moyen de voyager pensant qu'il etoit le plus expeditieux ; comme la quarantaine l'auroit beaucoup retardi s'il etoit allé par mer. Mais je crois qu'il s'est trompé et qu'il n'arrivera que dans le commencement de l'été." *

Lady Hester wrote as follows to "Le patriarche Grec" about the convent :

Du 23 fevrier, 1814.

"Au très respectable et très vénérable Seigneur,—

"Après le desir pour l'obtention de votre benediction et de prieres de votre Seigneurie, je represente que jusqu'à l'epoque de ma rencontre avec votre Secretaire, j'ignorais que c'est votre Grandeur qui est le proprietaire du Couvent de *Mar Elias*, Abra, croyant d'après ce qui m'a été raporté qu'il appartenait à un Eveque qui se, trouve actuellement en France et si j'avais eu connoissance du veritable fait je n'aurais par [sic] pris la liberté de faire des reparations au dit Couvent sans votre permission ; mais outre que j'ai été mal informé, mon Dragoman etait malade incapable de remplir ses devoirs—presentement, graces à Dieu et par le secour des prieres de votre Sainteté, je me trouve depuis 8 à 10 jours beaucoup mieux et lorsque le tems fera bon dans 30 à 40 jours j'espere que je serés honorés de votre visite affin de vous faire voir toutes les reparations faites au couvent et si parmi lesquelles il s'en trouve ququunes qui ne vous plaise par avant me sortie du Couvent j'aurés soin de les mettres dans leur premier état.

"Je remercie votre Seigneurie de tous les générostés et de ses bontés, fai[sant] des vœux à Dieu très haut pour la perpetuité de sa superiorité. Après ce qui à fallu représenter, desirant du nouveau l'obtention de votre Benediction et vos saintes prieres.

"Signé à l'original,

"HESTER LUCY STANHOPE.

"Anglaise." †

Dr. Meryon described Lady Hester's first permanent

* From Dr. Meryon's MSS.

† Ibid.

home in the East and how it was appointed. Lady Hester had settled at Mar Elias on February 20th. Dr. Meryon inhabited a tiny cottage half a mile away, at Abra.

"We came here by sea in a latine-sailed boat, very roomy and commodious," he wrote. "The weather during the whole passage was quite fine, and we had no accident or unpleasant occurrence whatever. We disembarked, and resided for a short time in a house in the French Caravanserai, a large quadrangular building formerly filled with French merchants, now having nothing but a Consul and two or three miserable individuals who are starving for want of business. Thence we transported ourselves, about the middle of February, to the Monastery of Saint Elias. The whole of Mount Lebanon is covered with monasteries, some of which have a fraternity, others have not. Ours is of this latter sort. It has served as the occasional residence of the Catholic Patriarch or Primate of the Roman Catholics of the mountain. It is built, as they generally are, of a quadrangular form, enclosing a court into which all the rooms open, with flat roofs, and of one storey only.

"Here we are likely to spend the next six months; and, in truth, no place presents greater security against the plague should it happen to infect Sayda. In these countries of insecurity, where scarcely six months pass without an insurrection, the march of troops, or a plague, or some calamity, the people are accustomed annually to lay in a store of provisions sufficient for the year's consumption, that, let happen what will, they may be secure at least of not starving. For during all such periods the shops are generally shut, and those who have no store of their own can hardly procure food. We have been obliged to imitate their example, and observe to what a few things the wants of man reduce themselves. Rice, wheat, oil and butter comprehend them all: and the poor here are content with wheat and oil only, making the oil serve all the purposes of butter. Add to these wood for fuel, and you see us armed against everything.

"I must confess I do not look forward to the time we shall spend here with much satisfaction. Solitude is agreeable when

with a good library, but we have not a single book in the world. Conversation soon wears out between two people. I almost wish I was a sportsman, for there are coveys and coveys of partridges close to us, and at least it would serve to pass a few mornings to go and shoot them, besides adding a good dish to the dinner table. But I most of all regret the want of medical books. The time I am now spending is time absolutely lost to my profession, and the want of books whereby to keep pace with the improvements of the times has led me into a desultory manner of practice that I would willingly correct as fast as possible.

"I see no chance of returning to England this year. I think I told you in my last that Mr. Bruce had quitted us in haste for England owing to the ill-health of his father. Now he is gone, Lady Hester is in a manner under my protection, and I am answerable to her brother and friends for her safety in these distant countries. So that to think of leaving her now would turn to my discredit and dishonour, since people would say I deserted her in a strange country and left a woman to shift for herself among a brutal and barbarous people. Moreover, had I the power, however much I might wish to return, I do not think it would be prudent to do it, and thus lose all chance of Lady Hester's future assistance in establishing me for life. As it is, it is impossible, and I feel I must yet forego for some time the much desired happiness of seeing my friends." *

Lady Hester was certainly not in a fit state to be left. Her malady recurred, and the few servants she had to wait upon her were seized with illness. At last the weather turned spring-like, and she recovered sufficiently to ride out in the gardens, experiencing a "new return of life," as Dr. Meryon described it.

"From that time her character changed deeply," he wrote. "She became simple in her habits almost to cynicism. She showed, in her actions and her conversation, a mind severe indeed, but powerfully vigorous. Scanning men and things with

* MS. letter, March 12th, 1814.

Becomes an Oriental

183

a wonderful intelligence, she commented upon them as if the motives of human actions were open to her inspection. Sometimes she looked into futurity like the Sybil of old. . . .” *

She had cast off the Western world for ever. She was henceforward to all intents and purposes Oriental; she was no longer a traveller, but a sojourner in an adopted land.

* “*Travels*,” vol. ii., p. 316.

CHAPTER XXII

MESHMUSHY

THE spring of 1814 passed quietly at the convent. Lady Hester had nothing pleasant with which to occupy her mind except a hazy plan for the future connected with treasure-seeking at Ascalon. She was worried and often peevish, subject, too, to fits of temper, which were no doubt the result of her enfeebled health. When great heat ensued about June, Dr. Meryon thought it wise that she should remove to the village of Meshmushy, about five hours' journey from the convent, and situated on a high part of the mountain.

Lady Hester applied to Emir Beshyr for a house there, but his permission was half-hearted, and, disturbed by this apparent show of opposition, she determined to set off at once and "pitch her tents on the mountain, if she found nothing better." *

She was ill and quarrelled with everybody. The day fixed for starting was July 25th, and on that day Dr. Meryon wrote in his diary:

"Her Ladyship awoke a little better. But the disputes that still continued between her and the maid spoiled the comfort of the house, and by keeping Lady Hester constantly in a passion made me quite miserable. At twelve she got up to the bath. Nothing was right, it was too cold, and too hot, and for an hour

* "Travels," vol. II., p. 373.

afterwards she would now break into a rage and now deeply deplore her situation that she was left in the hands of such wretches as we all were. . . .

"Her Ladyship had fixed on departing for Meshmushy this evening. The time of departure came, and she would not take her maid, who was obliged to give a written list of what the different packages and chests contained. The packing was entrusted to the dragoman and the orders for departure, &c., were given to him. I was desired not to interfere. The luggage was to be divided into two parts—one for the station of the evening and the other for the station of the following morning, as although Meshmushy was but six leagues off, we were to make four stations of it. A bedstead, intended for the second station was by a mistake of the dragoman sent to the first, and the medicine chest, which I had requested might be ready for us, at our arrival at the first station, was delayed until ten o'clock at night. It will be seen what a situation these mistakes of his brought me into.

"The whole of the day I had remained near her to soothe her. I had had no time to put on my travelling dress, nor to pack up my things, nor to eat my dinner, nor anything. Before setting off she complained bitterly of her lot. Yet she had a dragoman, a walking groom, a cook, a man servant of all works, four maids, &c., and myself. She said we all of us were unfeeling, all brutes! That oh! if Ld. T. or James could see her. That I was without a grain of spirit. (With no more spirit than a louse, or else I should have knocked Mrs. Fry down a thousand times.) That when Mr. Pitt was ill, if the P. of W.'s porter had insulted *him* as she had been insulted by that damned woman she would have knocked him down flat

"Sometimes she would say she could have nothing to eat. But what could we do? All that the country afforded she had at her command, and her dislikes which were repeated in a thousand shapes were remedied over and over as fast as the cook could do it.

"We set off. I walked by her side and the Cairo groom led her donkey. We arrived at the first station where her tent was pitched in readiness near a small spring, the water of which she was accustomed to drink, about one league from the convent.

The first thing that struck her eye was the wooden bedstead. She called for Pierre and in a violent rage said she should get him bastinadoed for having not carried it to the next station. He said Beaudin the dragoman had so ordered it. Immediately Pierre was sent off to fetch him.

"In the meantime some peasants, who were employed in watching some gourd gardens close by, had come to observe us. I feared they would go and prate in the village of what they saw, and the transport, when she entered the tent. I endeavoured to tranquillize her, and said 'for God's sake calm yourself—here are strangers just out of the tent.' But her passions were now worked into a fury. Thus agitated, alas! she was no longer herself, until quite exhausted, she burst into tears. I then went out to get some water for her and entered again. I accordingly withdrew, and much discomposed, went to some distance and lay down on the ground. I had walked a league up and down steep hills, and was dropping with sweat and agitation. There was no tree to lie under, and nothing to lie upon: and in my attention to Lady Hester I had come away without my pelisse, so that I was as one in England without his greatcoat. I felt chilly but my internal feelings were too powerful at the moment to let me suffer what I otherwise should have done from the night dew. Beaudin came, and threw the mistake of the bedstead on me. Lady Hester called me to her tent, abused me, called me names. 'You bear, make me some lemonade,' she cried. I said, 'your Ladyship forgets the respect that is due to your physician.' 'Physician! brute to stand and provoke me. Make me some lemonade.' 'No,' I answered, 'with your permission I will go about my business.' 'You shall not go,' she cried. Then I turned to Mr. Beaudin. 'Monsieur, ayez le bonté de faire la limonade pour Milédi—je ne peux pas.' So I went and mounted my ass where he stood saddled, called my servant boy and went home to Abra, where I arrived at midnight. Finding the camels for the second station not yet loaded I went to the Convent, set them off, and returning home went to bed. When I awoke in the morning and considered over the events of the preceding evening, I reflected that no treatment, however unjust, could authorize me to desert Lady Hester for a moment in a foreign country, and leave her in the

Temporary Insanity

187

hands of strangers upon whom there was no dependence. She had absolutely forbid her maid to come with her and she had compelled me to leave her. In these fits of temporary madness, all that bore the name of England or was English increased it. The bare remembrance of what she had been and how she was now left seemed to light a fire in her brain. No maid ever had so much to do as Anne, (the woman Mrs. Fry, of whom mention is made above). No one ever did so much, or strove so constantly to please her mistress. But Lady Hester had conceived an antipathy against her, and her fatigues went for nothing. There was no chance that she would be sent for. I therefore resolved to write and try to make up our dispute."

The letter he sent was as follows :

"Abra, Monday morning, 10 o'clock, July 26.

"I retired from your presence last night to avoid for myself a second indignity, and for your Ladyship the repetition of a scene that could only aggravate your indisposition. I am now desirous of returning, with the hope that I may meet with a reception that may increase those feelings of respectful attachment I ever entertained for your Ladyship's person.

"I have the honour to be, your very faithful humble servant,
"C. L. M."

"In the afternoon an answer was brought by the dragoman written by Lady Hester, saying, 'That I might go forward to Meshmushy to prepare some medicine for her.' I set off the following day, and went to Liba, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ leagues from the Convent. Whilst supping under some fig trees, the camel driver who had carried the heavy luggage passed and related what had occurred on the road. The second day Lady Hester had arrived at Liba, where I now was, but finding her tent placed at a disagreeable spot had caused it to be struck at midnight. She had then gone on, and the tent men misunderstanding their instructions, she had been obliged to lie down several hours at the top of a mountain. She had beat Pierre and the groom, and the people thought her brain was affected. The next morning I found Lady Hester in her tent at a village

188 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

called Bicara, four leagues from the convent of Mar Elias, but she refused to see me and desired me to go on, and I mounted up the steep mountain on which Meshmushy stands and sent down a person to show her Ladyship the best path up. She came half way the next day, and the following morning, the 29th, she arrived. She expressed a wish to see me in the evening. She was now calm and composed, and all was to be forgotten. I succeeded in composing her mind." *

Nothing could be more pathetic than this picture of Lady Hester, too enfeebled in health and miserable in mood to attempt to control the passions which in brighter hours she had never been taught to master. She was carried away by her feelings, but that does not prove that she was cruel by nature. Her temper once subsided, no one was more warmhearted or concerned than she for the very people she had reviled a short time before. Only a few days after the scenes depicted on the journey she expressed tenderhearted care for Anne Fry's health in a letter to her dragoman. Mrs. Fry was told to take exercise, to go out every evening and get the fresh air, to walk to the fountain, but by no means to strain herself by carrying water, lest she should get wet, or get heated, or take cold, etc. :

"MONSIEUR,—Je vous écris par ordre de Milédi pour que vous lui envoyiez des chandelles de cire, dont elle a besoin incessamment, n'en ayant point pour allumer dans sa chambre. Elle vous confie un paquet de lettres. Celle pour le Capitaine Forster, et celle pour Georgio Dallegio, vous les enverrez toutes les deux sous enveloppe à Monsieur Werry, en le priant d'en donner l'une au Capitaine quand il le verra, et de garder l'autre jusqu'à d'arrivée de George à Smyrna. Vous aurez soin d'écrire la superscription de la lettre à M. W. en caractères très legibles, en lui donnant le titre de Consul-General Britannique. Vous les ferez

* From a hitherto unpublished manuscript in the possession of the author, entitled "Lady Hester's journey to Meshmushy in 1814, in which she is mad."

A Letter from her Ladyship 189

passer à Chypre dans la manière la plus prompte possible. Vous devez écrire à M. Catissflitz avec ordre d'examiner l'état des deux barriques de Milédi (qu'il a encore dans son magasin); et puis d'en faire remplir une de vin rouge de la montagne de la meilleure qualité qui se trouve. Celle-ci Monsr. Catissflitz doit expedier par mer au Caire à Mr. Azceez, Drogman du Col. Missett voie de Damiette. Vous ferez des demandes très particulières de la part de Milédi sur la santé de Mr. Catissflitz: et vous direz que Milédi ne souffrira pas qu'il se fatigue trop: elle le conseille même de quitter le mauvois climat de Tripoli pour quelques jours et de changer l'air comme elle fait elle même en quittant Abra, qui étoit devenue insupportable à cause de la chaleur, pour un village dans la montagne. L'autre barrique, qui est aupres de lui, doit être envoyé voide à Mr. le drogman de Bairuth, qui s'appelle Damiani, et elle y restera jusqu'à ce qu'il aura des ordres sur le sujet.

"Milédi espere que vous ayez fait mettre à l'air la doublure de sa couverture avant de la faire mettre. Aussi que vous n'avez pas oublié de prendre une medecine toutes les semaines. Quant à Madame Fry inventez pour elle toujours quelque emploi qui puisse lui donner de l'exercise surtout dans l'air. Une promenade à la fontaine tous les soirs lui seroit extremement utile sans porter de l'eau—car elle s'en mouillerait, elle s'echaufferait, elle se fera malade.

"Milédi vous prie de ramasser de tous les cotés toutes les nouvelles possibles, surtout de la France. Apparemment elles ne manqueront pas, s'il est vrai que des batimens Francois [*sic*] ont commencé à trafiquer dans le port de Chypre. Il n'est pas necessaire de vous dire de ramasser toutes les nouvelles possibles pour la divertir, car j'ai le plaisir de vous dire qu'elle se trouve un peu mieux tant par rapport de son toux que de la douleur du côté."

The contemporary copy of this letter, in the possession of the author, is preceded by the following note in Meryon's handwriting:

"A letter from Dr. Meryon to Mr. Beaudin, Lady Hester Stanhope's dragoman at Mar Elias, near Sidon, from le Couvent

190 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

de Moushimoushi, le 5 Août, 1814. Dictated by Lady Hester, and serving as an example of her French."

About this time Lady Hester dictated a letter to Mr. Barker at Aleppo, in which she refers with pleasure to her brother's success in Holland, and with grief to the death of her sister Lady Lucy Taylor.*

"The business of Bergen op Zoom was too military for you to take much delight in. The first regt. of guards was completely cut up: they were all killed. There were two thousand of the English taken prisoners. The attack of course failed. † Major Stanhope was sent with full powers the next day to conclude the exchange of prisoners. He managed this affair in so masterly a manner that he got back 2500 men. He was then expedited to England to give the acct. of this defeat to the Prince Regent and the Duke of York. I give you no instructions (said Genl. Graham): but collect reports and speak the truth. The Prince desired Mr. Stanhope to consider himself as Lt. Colonel in consideration of the great merit of Gen. Graham upon this occasion.

"After a conversation with the Prince, the Prince said, I am aware that promotion was never given to the bearer of bad news, but for the manner in which Mr. Stanhope had concluded the treaty of exchange, he desired he wd. consider himself as Lt. Colonel.

"The moment the Duke of York heard of Lady Hester's illness at Latakia and of her being alone, he urged Mr. Stanhope to depart instantly for Syria, giving him a letter to Ld. Melville, first Lord of the Admiralty, to desire that Capt. Spencer, Ld. Spencer's son, who was about to sail for the Mediterranean, would convey him on his voyage. Mr. Stanhope at first was overjoyed with his permission, but upon a little reflection said Lady Hester would not welcome him if she thought for a moment he neglected any point of military duty or etiquette: and, having just recd. a singular mark of favour by his late promotion, it

* Lady Lucy Taylor d. at Coldharbour, Surrey, on March 1st, 1814.

† Stormed by Graham, March 8th, 1814.

Death of her Sister

191

would be his duty to return instantly to Holland. Such indeed were the feelings of his own mind after the first sensation was over: his Royal Highness paid him some flattering comps. and left him his own master to act as he liked.

"This of course took place before peace was made, when he wd. have set out instantly. But, thinking Lady Hester might have followed his former injunctions by a subsequent letter to repair to Italy, he did not know where to find her, and is waiting with great impatience for her Ladyship's commands.

"Lady Hester has received from all quarters the highest encomiums possible upon her brother's conduct; but some very unpleasing intelligence in her other letters, which is the death of her sister, Lady Lucy Taylor, who has a family of seven children. Her mind being much agitated upon various subjects, and being anxious to write to England by a ship which is about to sail for Malta, she has employed me to make this communication to you.

"Lady Hester has recd. some very long letters from Sr. Sydney, with an immense quantity of bulletins, &c., but with nothing newer than we know of. There is another packet expected at Malta every day, which she hopes will contain fresher intelligence.

"Don't forget after the 10th of October, (that being Michs. Quarter, and as those banking people are so par: it is better to date it after than upon that day) to send to Mr. Coutts two certificates of Lady Hester's life one by sea and one by land.

"Her Ladyship desires me to enclose one of Sr. Sydney's letters: seeing is believing.—

"Sr. Sydney has sent to her Ladyship five hundred papers and bulletins to be circulated. But she put them all by to be burned, saying she would be 'first in a village not second at Rome.'

"As soon as peace was made and the different Generals were put off the staff the Duke of York appointed Col. Stanhope his Aide-de-camp." *

* From the Meryon MSS.

192 **Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope**

Mr. Barker had Lady Hester's affairs in hand. He wrote to Meryon from Aleppo on July 29th, 1814 :

"Your messenger of the 19th inst. duly delivered me yesterday evening your disps. in good order. They contained two sets of Bills, each for £200, drawn by Lady Hester Stanhope on Coutts & Co., the 31st July and 2nd August, which I shall immediately send to Mr. Morier at Constantinople for negotiation and remit her Ladyship p8,000 on account of what they may produce.

"Altho' you do not direct me to make that remittance I have two reasons for supposing such were her Ladyship's intentions; namely, that the Bills were antedated, and that I have funds in hand belonging to Lady Hester about p3,000, besides the £400, now received.

"I shall be glad to hear that I have judged rightly, but you must confess that your instructions were very imperfect and that strictly speaking I should have been justified in letting the Bills lie on my desk until I received further orders which I should perhaps have resolved to do, if by accident there had been in your letter a Packet of her Ladyship's for Constantinople: because in that case, I might have supposed the conveyance of that Packet was the object of the messenger's journey; but as your letter contained nothing of importance but the Bills, I conclude he was dispatched to procure a supply of money.

"He will therefore return to-day in charge of a Packet to her Ladyship's address, by way of Tripoli, with strong injunctions to enquire as he approaches Beirut whether you have changed your residence.

"I am extremely sorry to hear that ill-health is the cause of her Ladyship's removal from Saida.

"I do not think you will be able to find a better retreat from the heat than the Convent of Hanissa. I am persuaded that the air of what these people call Jurd would be too subtle for Lady Hester's constitution.

"The plague has, thank God, almost entirely ceased here and I hope in a few days to take a ride.

Preparations for Baalbec

193

"I observe her Ladyship has given up the idea of purchasing Aleppo stuffs.

"I have not received any advice from Constantinople since those of the 7th June, and consequently know nothing of the packet from Mr. Bruce which Mr. Liston said he had delivered to Mr. Pisani by Mr. Bruce's order. Nor have I heard any news of Georgio or Carabit." *

Early in September Lady Hester projected a visit to Baalbec, but it was the middle of October before the expedition started. It consisted of herself, the doctor, eight men and five women servants, with fifteen mules for baggage and asses for riding. A list of the impedimenta contains Lady Hester's quaint comments regarding the hiring of men and mules :

On a journey from Meshmushy to Baalbec :

MULE ACCOUNT

Two Cairo cases	1
Georgio's Hampers	1
Bed, Carpetbag, &c.	1
Saddle bags & Canteen	1
Ladyship's Tent, mats, mangale	1 : 5
2 Kitchen baskets, servants provisions.	1
Mr. Bruce's tent, servants' <i>Libadi</i>	1
Other Tents	1
Medicine chest, my things	1
Beaudin's effects, Georgio's & wine	1
Spare mule sundries	1 : 6
Total	11

Also 1 mule and one mucker }
 expressly for Her Ladyship } . . . 1

* From an autograph letter in the author's possession.

ASSES ACCOUNT

Mrs. Fry	1
Pierre	1
George	1
Spare do	1

"The proprietors of the mules and asses above mentioned must be six persons and not more, except the man who is proprietor of the mule that follows her Ladyship, making in the whole seven. Her Ladyship has nothing whatever to do with the feeding of their cattle. She feeds them only. She hires the mules at 2 piastres per day to go to Baalbec—if discontented with them she sends them about their business, if pleased, it is hers at pleasure (according to her future plans) to keep them or not. They must be here on Sunday night striking or pitching the tents, according to the pleasure of her excellency the Sit. Should it be her pleasure to go no one is to dispute her command, and should it be her pleasure to stop, no one is to say no, so that the Komack (station) may be from 1 to 10 hours, and as she wills every thing must be done." *

Lady Hester's restlessness had returned with the improvement of her health. She travelled from place to place.

"We have been making a four months' tour through Calo-Syria, the modern district of Accar, to the Cedars of Mt. Lebanon, to Tripoli, Beirut, and other parts of the Syrian coast," wrote Dr. Meryon on February 2nd, 1815. "Occupied in the management of a vast family (for in these excursions we sometimes make up twenty persons) I was unable to find time and opportunities for writing. . . .

"The ruins of the ancient Heliopolis, now called Baalbec, afford a noble specimen of the grandeur of the Syrian kings. . . . We spent eighteen days encamped close to these venerable and magnificent remains of heathen pride. . . . However

* From Dr. Meryon's MSS.



LADY HESTER STANHOPE.

The Faithful Meryon

195

anxious I feel to see home and my friends, considerations of an equally strong nature leave me no alternative but that of attending the footsteps of Lady Hester wherever she goes: and no persuasion on earth could induce me whilst she has no Englishman near her person but myself, to think of leaving her for a moment in so distant a country." *

On January 28th Mar Elias was reached once more, only to be deserted again the following month, when the famous treasure-seeking journey took place.

* MS. letters of February 2nd, 1815, from the Convent of Mar Elias.

CHAPTER XXIII

ASCALON (1815)

LADY HESTER is famed far and wide for her treasure-hunt, and Dr. Meryon described it in a letter dated June 12th, 1815, from the Convent of Mar Elias :

“We had scarcely finished our tour to Baalbec, Tripoli, etc., when we undertook a fresh one to the ruins of Ascalon, in somewhat a different guise from the former, as our object was sanctioned by the Sultan himself. The Turkish government was furnished with certain documents by which they were led to believe that in a part of the ruins of that ancient city were hid immense treasures, and they fixed on Lady Hester (whose extraordinary talents for business were known to them from various quarters) to conduct excavations on a large plan that were to be made to ascertain the truth. For this purpose a Capugi Bashi, furnished with a special commission, was sent from the Porte ordered by very forcible firmans to vest Lady Hester with whatever powers were necessary for the prosecution of the affair, and the whole Pachalik of Acre was put under her direction. You wd. have been delighted to have seen the pomp in which she was escorted to Ascalon. Two troops of horse, a division of Albanian infantry, tent-men, watermen, lamplighters and all the extraneous retinue of an Eastern prince, made up a body of more than two hundred persons. Two hundred peasants were daily set to work (by quotas from each village). Twenty meals, of from ten to five dishes, issued three times a day from the kitchen, and the soldiers and peasants were fed with large bowls of rice. A small fort was erected close to the spot in order to secure the gold from plunder, and, ere we had begun, the

rumours of the treasures we had found had spread all over Syria. The work lasted fifteen days, under the inspection of Lady Hester, and, though productive of many rare things in statuary and architecture, failed in the material point towards which it was directed. The trough of masonry, supposed to have once enclosed the treasures, was found rifled and empty. The idea of treasures hid in the earth is laughed at in England, because the security we enjoy and the advantage of never having our country made the seat of war does not drive us to the necessity of concealing our wealth. Paper money also is easily transported on one's person, and a man flies with his fortune in his waistcoat lining. But in the East all is specie, too heavy to transport in times of danger. Hence it is that, in cases of siege, tumults and the like, each person endeavours to secrete his property, and as many guard the secret with themselves, and are perhaps killed or driven from their homes, so that it dies with them, it happens that discoveries of treasures are very frequent in this country, and individuals suddenly grow rich by no supposable means but these. If this conviction were not strong, never would the Porte have put itself to the expense it did, and never wd. Lady Hester have undertaken the conduct of it." *

Lady Hester travelled in a palanquin, covered with crimson cloth, and ornamented with six golden balls. Besides her own tents, twenty were furnished by orders of the Porte, one double, one "like the calyx and corolla of a flower inverted," which had been used by the Princess of Wales.

"Between the village and the ruins was fixed a tent," wrote Meryon, describing the scene of the excavations, "and here Lady Hester sat in the daytime and received visits from the agas, the malems, etc. At two she generally mounted her ass and rode to see the workmen. On these occasions they would shout and renew their digging with fresh activity." †

Throughout the treasure-hunt Lady Hester showed a distinct lack of sense of humour. Nothing of value was

* From an MS. letter, June 12th, 1815.

† "Travels," vol. iii., p. 159.

198 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

found, except a mutilated statue, and though she might have kept it as a trophy, Lady Hester caused it "to be broken into a thousand pieces; that malicious people might not say she came to look for statues for her countrymen, and not for treasures for the Porte." *

She had been in communication with Sir Robert Liston when negotiating with the Sultan about the hidden treasure at Ascalon, and she asked Dr. Meryon to give him the account of her failure :

"Nous avons commencé à travailler à tracer les murailles au coté du Midi, du Nord et du couchant, et nous avons trouvé au coté du couchant le 7^{me} jour une fabrique dessous le pavé très extraordinaire que je trouve est la chose que nousp cherchons, mais elle étoit malheureusement voide. Tout ceci ne peut pas être bien expliqué sans le dessin et le papier des indices que le Zaim,† Effendi apportera avec lui. Je ne pense pas, que cet argent certainement pas étoit enlevé de moins de deux cent ans, parcequ'il-y-a de vieux gens de 70 ans à 80, dont les pères ont veu jusqu'à 100 qui n'ont jamais entendu parler d'une chose pareille. Vous pouvez bien imaginer que nous sommes très désappointer mais le destiné vouloit ainsi."‡

On April 15th, there being nothing further to detain Lady Hester at Ascalon, she went to Jaffa, whence she wrote to General Oakes telling him her reasons for refusing to meet Bruce on the Continent, and stating besides that she had decided to ask her brother James to fetch her from Syria.

"What I have suffered is gone by," she wrote; "what I may still have to suffer in this world, God knows best. Let it be what it will, may I only be *resigned* to my fate, and to His

* Letter to the Rt. Hon. the Earl Bathurst, then Secretary of State, printed in the "Travels."

† Zaym, the emissary of the Porte to Lady Hester, investing her with power.

‡ From Dr. Meryon's MSS.

An Unsatisfactory Servant 199

pleasure. The Turks give me every day one proof of their superiority over Christians—their submission to the will of Providence.” *

From Jaffa she also dictated an extraordinary letter to Signor Dallegio of Syra, complaining about his brother Georgio, who was in her employment.

“ Jaffa, April 24, 1815.

“I am sorry to inform you that I am obliged to dismiss Georgio from my service, as I can no longer bear with his conceit, his disobedience, his obstinacy and the trickery of his conduct. He thinks that because he is not a thief, that is all that is necessary to give him a good character. But I think exactly the opposite. One can be on one's guard against a thief, but one cannot always keep one's eyes open to examine into the conduct of a person who has a bad disposition like Georgio. I have had an extraordinary amount of patience with this young man. It would have been impossible to have looked after his manners and his health better than I have done and to have given him better opportunities for cultivating his gifts and for studying. Instead of profiting by these opportunities, he simply became more conceited and more ignorant day by day, and because I cannot trust him in anything but money matters, in which he has always been honest, I send him back to his own country, from whence it grieves me that he ever came a second time, because he had my positive orders never to return unless he was determined to adhere to the behaviour I had laid down for him—namely, to act on the square with me. If a young man is unfortunately placed in a situation in which he is obliged to resort to tricks to obtain his daily bread, it is less reprehensible if he behaves basely; but with me, or with any other person who has a knowledge of the world, such conduct can only be harmful to his best interests. As I am invariably just, I am always candid in the manner in which I act towards everybody, and I would speak to any other person who discussed Georgio with me exactly as I am speaking to you. Far from giving him

* *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, p. 323.

any sort of recommendation, I will make his faults known, as well as his want of gratitude. A Sais, whom I sent to England in charge of a horse, would have returned to Cairo, his native place, with 500 taloris in his pocket, if he had not been robbed at Messina, as well as some fine presents which he received through my recommendation. And at the moment when I contemplated sending Georgio to carry out some commissions in England, where he might perhaps have been no less fortunate than the Sais, against my strict orders he secretly put medicine on his head [*il a mis des médecines en secret sur la tête*], after having given me the strongest assurances that he would never apply any remedy without my permission. I have been exceedingly strict in this matter, knowing that some people have lost their eyesight and gone mad by applying dangerous remedies in similar diseases.

"Three years ago, in Jerusalem, there were some priests who put I do not know what on their heads, which in appearance mitigated the evil. [*Il y a trois ans que des prêtres à Jerusalem ont mis je ne sais pas quoi sur sa tête qui a diminué le mal en apparence.*] As soon as he got a little heated about the journey, and when I refused to give him permission to go to Constantinople at the beginning of the plague, he went on like a madman and stamped with both feet on the contract which M. Pisani had drawn up when he left Constantinople, and loaded his pistols with the idea of killing himself. This act of violence I pardoned, as well as a thousand others, but I will not pardon the act of disobedience and the breaking of his word in the last affair, for at the very moment when he was acting in such a despicable manner, I was busy writing to the best surgeon, not merely in England, but perhaps in the whole of Europe, to see Georgio when he travelled to England, and to give his opinion and his instructions as to what would be suitable for him.

"I think I have entered into enough detail at present, and I am sorry, sir, to think that this may give you pain. As regards the situation in which I placed Georgio, the manner in which he is clothed, and everything that is to his advantage in money affairs, you can find out from others what is the general opinion on this matter. But, at the same time, it is necessary to add that a man whom I send back disgraced cannot expect my

benefactions the same as another one who would have quitted my service with that approbation which I am only too happy to accord to those who serve me with the fidelity and attention due to me.

"It would be useless for you or Georgio to trouble M. Pisani for any recommendation, for this worthy gentleman will never give a character to any person with whom I have so much reason to be displeased.

"It is only fair to let you know that if Georgio ever makes use of my name to introduce or recommend himself to any English or French traveller, or any European whatsoever, I will find the means to make him repent of his impertinence."

This letter she enclosed to the Bishop of Syra, with the following note :

"Herewith you will find a letter which I have written to the brother of Georgio to tell him of his conduct. . . . As it is your work to try and apply a remedy to the vices of the inhabitants of your island, I take the liberty of informing you how much this young man has need of your counsels, and to inform you at the same time of the reasons which actuate me in dismissing him from my service." *

Georgio was treated far better than was to be expected from these complaints. Her ladyship and the doctor, after leaving Jaffa, reached Mar Elias in the middle of May. About that date she asked Meryon to write the following letter to Lord Valentia, which she sent by the very Georgio she had intended to dismiss. She had rid herself of him temporarily by dispatching him to England as she had intended to do before his misconduct.

Lady H. L. Stanhope to Viscount Valentia, touching two Abyssinians † to whom she had afforded an asylum.

* From Dr. Meryon's MSS. written by him in Lady Hester's French style.

† The names the Abyssinians went by were Mariam and Elias. Meryon gives an account of finding them and acquainting Lady Hester with the fact, in "Travels," vol. iii., pp. 189-90.

Convent of St. Elias, near Sidon,

May or June, [1815]

"MY LORD,—I shall make no apology for troubling your Lordship upon a subject which I have reason to suppose will be an interesting one to you. If it bores you, my Lord, your reputation as a traveller must account for it. Several Habashees having taken the resolution to visit Jerusalem, embarked for this country. Amongst them was a woman of family, accompanied by her brother and fifteen servants. Unfortunately, the ship struck upon a rock, and they lost all their property. Several of the people died of the plague, others attempted to get back to their own country, and the servants and slaves ran away. The woman and her brother, however, arrived safe at Cairo, where Maalem Galey, after having taken care of them for some time, gave them a letter to Dayr Mkhallas (a Convent about three miles distant from the one I inhabit),* which has belonging to it a convent for women, where the woman intended to place herself until she received letters from Abyssinia. The priests, however, appearing unwilling to receive this woman, and I knowing that she would be very uncomfortable there, I have taken her and her brother to reside with me as long as I remain in this country, which seems to make them very happy. Musa seems very anxious that I should promise him a letter of recommendation to their King, because, said he, as she is a woman of some note, it would be of consequence that the King should be aware that she had been in good hands. I told them I feared that my recommendation would be of little use, but that I would write to your Lordship on the subject. Musa has given me some very interesting information about his country, where the English interest appears to be cultivated by a Mr. Pearse, as he pronounces it, who has built a house, made a garden, and married a Habashee woman. This man I presume to be one of your Lordship's protégés. Georgio, a Greek in my service, is the bearer of this letter, and will take charge of your Lordship's answer or anything you may choose to convey to these poor

* The convent spoken of by Volney as having the best library in Syria; but which Gezzar Pacha's troops ruined in some of the bad times which took place after Volney left the country.

people, who will be very friendless when I leave this country next year. Indeed, anything you may have to send to Egypt or Syria you may safely put into Georgio's hands, as I can depend upon his honesty, although Greeks I consider the worst people in the Levant. These Habashees appear very amiable, clever people. Musa's description of war in Abyssinia is quite beautiful, although too savage. He says we are so much more impetuous than cannon can be, that we do not need their assistance. This poor man has preserved a little New Testament in his own language, written upon Gazelle's skin. I should think that some books bound like prayer books, with a few Crosses and Jesus Christs and Virgin Marys upon them, with blank sheets, and about the size of a very thick duodecimo, would be a very acceptable present.

"The man said one very striking thing the other day to me. 'You must not think that I am *long-necked* with everybody (an Arabic expression), for I don't put confidence in any people but English, and I should not find myself at my ease under anybody's roof but your's.' I leave to your Lordship's better judgment, and your known liberality, what is most proper to be done for these unhappy people.

"I have the honour to be, your Lordship's obedient humble servant,

"(Signed) H. L. STANHOPE." *

Georgio,† his experimental misdemeanour with medicine forgiven if not forgotten, left Mar Elias in July. One of his commissions was to find for his mistress a new medical man. Dr. Meryon was straining at the leash, and Lady Hester, who, as he put it, "sees into the workings of people's minds

* From Dr. Meryon's MSS.

† Of Georgio Dallegio, Meryon wrote to a friend in England: "He is by nation a Greek, and interpreter for the Greek and Turkish languages to Lady Hester, and is sent to England with letters, and upon some other commissions. You must understand him to be a man of languages, not of confidence, in her Ladyship's family; so she desires me to tell you. But could you show him any little civility as by giving him a sight of the interior of the Mansion House, of Guildhall, the Tower, St. Paul's or any of the shows in your quarter, I know it would please Lady Hester."—MS. letter of June 20th, 1815.

204 **Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope**

as well as they do themselves," had guessed his feelings ; which was perhaps not very surprising.

Georgio took with him a letter and some tiger skins for General Oakes.

"Here the covering of a horse reaches to his tail," wrote Lady Hester on June 25th, "and the tigers' skins look very well when made up with crimson ; but silver and gold quite spoils their effect. I think Georgio will explain (should you like it) the fashion of Syria for you to improve upon it. You will find the boy not stupid, but he is not all he ought to be, though honest in money matters. Don't spoil him, pray, or take his humble manner for humility, for he is at bottom *conceit* itself ; but he may amuse you, and I should like to hear an account of your looks from someone who has seen you lately." *

She sent him also two kinds of wine, "one sweet, the other less so."

"This is more Bruce's present than mine," she added, "for he was so anxious to procure you some, and did give a large order for wine, which was put by, but sold because not transported directly, which the plague would not allow of."

In a postscript to the same letter she wrote :

"If ever you see Sir David Dundas, pray remember me kindly to him. Tell him I am the *Sir Pivot* of the East. I never forget, however, that I owe not a little of my military fame to having borne the name of his aide-de-camp when he commanded in Kent. Many people do not like him because he did not make a good commander-in-chief. I like him the *better* for it. There is but one sun, one moon, and one commander-in-chief. We want no more !"

* *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, p. 325.

CHAPTER XXIV

"SHEIK IBRAHIM"

GEORGIO having taken his departure, Lady Hester arranged to allow Dr. Meryon to make a trip to Alexandria for a few weeks in order to attend upon Colonel Missett, the condition of whose health gave him much trouble. Meryon left Mar Elias early in August. On his way to Egypt he fell in with "Sheik Ibrahim,"* better known to English readers as Burckhardt, who was then travelling from Cairo to Alexandria.† They proceeded on their journey together, and both stayed with Colonel Missett. Burckhardt expressed an inclination to accompany the doctor back to Syria, but he went no farther than Damietta.

Colonel Missett profited by the doctor's attendance, and wrote to him from Alexandria on 3rd October, 1815:

"It is with more satisfaction than I can express that I have

* John Lewis Burckhardt (1784-1817), author of "Travels in Nubia," "Travels in Syria," "Travels in Arabia," etc. Lady Hester met him at Nazareth. Her opinion of him "was not a favourable one, and she never altered it."—"Travels," vol. i., p. 271.

† A curious letter, dictated by Lady Hester, was sent to Dr. Meryon when on his way to Egypt. It contains instructions about some correspondence he was taking to Colonel Missett and others, and concludes with an odd reference to the battle of Waterloo, 'Madame se porte assez bien, elle dit qu'elle se portera très bien, si elle n'était pas entourée des voleurs et des imbeciles, ce qui est vrai.

"Il n'y a point de chemise venue de Tripoly quoi qu'il y ait des lettres venues aujourd'hui avec la nouvelle d'une grande victoire remportée par le Duc de Wellington, que Madame dit ne tiens à rien que de voir beaucoup de ces amis tués ou blessés. Par quelle voie avais vous expédié votre lettre pour M. Cataifia, qu'il ne l'a pas reçue ?

"Je vous souhaite un bon voyage,

"B. BRAUDIN."

heard of your safe arrival at Damietta, for I confess I had been rather anxious about you and the Sheik, the weather we had here for two days after your departure having been far from favourable. . . .

"The fever with which I was troubled when you quitted Alexandria has gradually left me, and I begin to recover both spirits and strength, which gives me hopes that in a little time I shall no longer be the knight of the woeful countenance. Tell the Sheik that Mr. Schutz was married yesterday, but that I am not quite certain that the lady is as yet the better for it, as I understand that he was rather overcome with liquor when he went to bed last night.

"Turner sailed four and twenty hours after you, fully determined to return immediately from Smyrna, should he find on his arrival there that Mr. Liston had gone home, and that he himself was to remain some time longer in the Levant. I therefore anticipate the pleasure of seeing him soon again, for I understand from a person recently arrived from Smyrna that a frigate has been sent to the Dardanelles to take their Excellencies on board.

"Thurburn joins me in best wishes for you and Sheik Ibrahim, and I remain, with sincere regard,

"My dear sir, faithfully yours,

"(Signed) E. MISSETT." *

On his return Meryon found that Lady Hester had left Mar Elias temporarily for Meshmushy, whither he followed her on November 5th. She was in good health, but greatly troubled by the murder of Colonel Boutin, whom she wished to avenge. She made him write to Colonel Missett to this effect :

"Nov., 1815:

"The doctor found me on his return in very low spirits and greatly agitated about the shocking death of poor Colonel Boutin.

* From the original letter in the possession of the author.



"SHEIK IBRAHIM," JOHN LEWIS BURCKHARDT (1784-1817).

I cannot tell you how enraged I am at the conduct of the Franks of the country in this business. Misfortune never comes alone. These same Ansaries have murdered some rich Turks on their way from Constantinople through their mountains, and the mule-drivers are related to my favourite muleteer, who does the business of the house, so I have let him go on leave for the present to console his family. All this is very doleful.

"As for poor Monsieur Boutin,* my feelings have taught me to concern myself as much with his affairs as if he had been an Englishman. The Pacha of Acre had already sent, at my request, the strongest orders to his governors, before any application had been made to him by the Frank consuls. An officer was sent to make inquiries into the murder by the Pacha of Aleppo; but the Ansarie Mountains are divided between three pachas, and this officer only paraded the foot of the mountain, which is doing nothing. The difficulty has been that the people are so excessively bad, and, knowing they are suspected, troops, unless in a very large body, can hardly venture.

"But I am not to be satisfied with common reports, and I have sent four villainous looking fellows, very ill dressed, to shuffle themselves into the different villages and to pick up some just information which may lead to something, and which I can afterwards farther examine into, for to send troops first of all is useless, as their purpose will be guessed at. It is not enough to know for a certainty that the poor man is no more: I am not one to stop there, and I am determined to discover the perpetrators of this foul murder, for the sake of humanity and for the sake of Europeans in general who may visit or reside in this country. I am obliged to make use of rascals, for nobody else has the courage to stir.

"Yesterday I received notice that, in consequence of a second appeal I had made to the Pacha, more strong than the first, he had ordered the Governor of Tripoli to hold a body of troops in readiness, and had signified to the motsellims of different towns that whatever assistance I or my people demanded was to be

* Boutin had attempted to cross the mountains inhabited by the Ansaries, accompanied only by two servants.

208 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

granted. My dragoman is gone in another direction, and he is to take horsemen. The Ansarie country is a difficult one to explore; but I hope, in the course of time, as I never give up a thing, that some certain details may be procured, which I am excessively anxious for on account of his friends in France. Sheik Ibrahim, I suppose, will not believe the Pacha's kindness to me, as this is no matter of right, but an act of personal friendship." *

Colonel Missett referred to these matters in a letter to Dr. Meryon :

" Alexandria, 10th January, 1816.

" Your letter of the 31st of October is at last come to relieve me from the uneasiness I had felt on your account, not having heard any tidings of you since your departure from Damietta and knowing the danger of travelling through Syria in its present disturbed state. I can easily imagine how much you must have been affected at finding Lady Hester so distressed as she appears to have been at the death of M. Boutin, and as it was so natural for her Ladyship to be, considering that he was a friend of hers, and that he met his death in so melancholy a manner. Knowing the gratification she would derive from the recovery of his papers, and from having it in her power to communicate to his friends the real circumstances of his fall, I sincerely wish she may fully succeed in obtaining the information she desires. As to the apathy or insensibility the Franks in Syria have manifested on that occasion, I am not at all astonished at it, as it is exactly what their brethren in this country would have done: men who have no feelings for their nearest relations could not be expected to lament the untimely fate of a stranger, however deserving of esteem or regard.

" The Sheik had also a long voyage to his destination, for he was nearly a fortnight in reaching Cairo, where, on his arrival, he had the mortification to find Mr. Schutz's door shut against him, a mortification which, I understand, he shares with every

* From Dr. Meryon's MSS.

person capable of exciting that gentleman's jealousy.* Lady Hester appears to be very angry with our friend for taking upon himself to censure the conduct of Mr. A., whose fair speeches and well-turned phrases have imposed upon her Ladyship. . . ."

[Here comes an account of his health.]

"My successor, Mr. Salt, left London for Egypt the latter end of August, giving out that he would be here before the end of November, in which I have no doubt he was sincere. But as he has not yet made his appearance, I have not been able to undertake the journey you had recommended me to make to Upper Egypt, and I fear the season will be too far advanced when he comes for me to put it then in execution. . . .

"Faithfully yours,

"E. MISSETT."†

Lady Hester was both restless and unhappy. She was greatly concerned about the disappearance of Boutin, she was contemplating a journey to various parts of the Continent, and at Christmas time she suffered from a severe attack of home-sickness.

"One day in December, 1815," wrote Dr. Meryon, "I was reading the 'Absentee' (one of Miss Edgeworth's fashionable tales) to Lady Hester. In it (somewhere about the sixteenth chapter) mention is made of home, of the paternal roof, etc.

* A letter of the same date from Colonel Missett's secretary refers to this subject: "The Sheik, in order to console himself for the cold reception he met with from the bride, was going to throw himself into the arms of a young Habashee slave, when he discovered that his intended had got scabies. He is likely to be detained some months longer in Egypt, as there is no prospect of any caravan setting out soon in the direction he intends travelling."

The manner in which he occupied the interval appears from a letter written by a friend in Cairo on February 10th: "Je vous dirai en confidence que le Cheikh Ibrahim, dont vous connoissez la resolution de vivre en bon Musulman, a quitté depuis quelque tems la maison de M. Boghoz pour aller se loger dans l'intérieur de la ville, je ne sais où; car il fait un mystère de son habitation actuelle soit pour dérouter les curieux, soit pour avoir ses coudées plus franches. On se dit même tout bas à l'oreille qu'il a voulu mettre à exécution, mais à la manière Musulmane, le précepte de l'Eternel qui a dit: 'croissez et multipliez.' Mais ohut! Honi soit qui mal y pense."—From original letters in possession of the author.

† From an original letter in the possession of the author.

210 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

She seemed to recollect past times, and the tears came frequently into her eyes.

"It was indeed a scene for reflection to see on a wooden bedstead (something like those in an English barrack), without curtains, the granddaughter of the great Chatham lying sickly and in tears, with no relation, no old friend near her, with nobody but myself—who had first known her long after Mr. Pitt's death—and one single English maid; to think that her high spirit, incapable of bearing the slights of persons she had once looked down upon, had driven her from disgust to foreign countries. When I looked at her and considered what she had been, I was deeply touched, and the mournful sight she presented will not easily be effaced from my recollection." *

The second series of "Tales of Fashionable Life," which contained "The Absentee," had appeared in 1812, and was very popular. Lady Hester enjoyed the stories, in spite of the tears she shed over them. Wishing others to share her pleasure she dispatched the volume to Colonel Missett.

"I now learn by a letter from Lady Hester to the Colonel," wrote his secretary on March 31st, 1816, to Meryon, "that her Ladyship intended sending some books by the way of Leghorn. As, however, Miss Edgeworth's 'Tales of Fashionable Life' is the only one of those works which the Colonel is particularly desirous to have, and as they would probably be exposed to fumigation or other improper treatment if sent in a case to Leghorn, her Ladyship might perhaps make it convenient to carry them with her to Europe." †

But Lady Hester's projected journey fell through.

* From an MS. note in the possession of the author.

† From an autograph letter in the possession of the author.

CHAPTER XXV

BANKES AND BUCKINGHAM (1816)

THE following spring at Mar Elias was brightened by the arrival of visitors.

In the previous November Lady Hester heard that Bankes * was on his way from Europe to Syria, and she wrote to Acre to secure a good reception for him. He arrived at Mar Elias about the same date as Miss Williams, who came from Malta.

Early in 1816 Mr. Bankes met Mr. Silk Buckingham † near Jerusalem, and together they visited various places in Syria. On February 4th they parted, owing to incidental difficulties on the journey, and it happened that Bankes had some of Mr. Silk Buckingham's baggage with him.

"I cannot trust it alone to Damascus," he wrote to his friend, "and yet am afraid that you will feel embarrassed without it on your arrival there. As I reckon that you will pass from thence across to Sayda, I shall take it with me so far, and leave it in Lady Hester Stanhope's charge. . . . I shall remain with Lady Hester Stanhope about five days, and if I do not turn round for Damascus, which will depend a good deal upon her advice and upon circumstances, I shall make my way pretty direct to Aleppo, lengthening out my road by excursions, however, here

* William John Bankes, member of Parliament, traveller and artist, d. 1855.

† James Silk Buckingham, who established the *Calcutta Journal* in 1818. He was expelled from India in 1823 for attacks on the Government. Lord Broughton calls him "the notorious Mr. Buckingham."—"Recollections of a Long Life," vol. iv., p. 46.

212 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

and there, to give you time to come up to me, so that I trust that at the latest we may meet in Aleppo and make our journey to Palmyra together." *

This was not the plan that Mr. Bankes eventually followed. After staying at the Convent of Mar Elias a few days he attempted a journey to Palmyra alone, in April.

Lady Hester furnished him with a letter of recommendation to Mâlem Haym, minister of the Pacha, but foolishly disclosed to him that she had arranged that her letters should be of two classes, some distinguished by one seal, others by two. "If there comes to me," she informed the Pacha, "a great man on whom I can rely, and whose word you may trust as my own, who wants to live among you to see your mock fights or a camel killed and eaten, to ride on a dromedary in his housings, &c., I will send him with two seals: but if it be another sort of person, I will send him with one." †

Naturally Bankes was curious to know in which class she placed him, and when he discovered that he was amongst those who were accorded one seal only ‡ he refused to present the letter, and deposited it at Aleppo with Mr. Barker.

Lady Hester did not like Bankes, and her feeling against him increased. Letters between Bankes, Meryon and Lady Hester § explain one of the reasons for this:

"My dear Lady Hester," wrote Bankes from Tripoli, on June 17th, 1816, "as I was in the full expectation of meeting

* Verbatim report of the action for libel in the case of *Buckingham versus Bankes*, pp. 7-8. (London, 1826.)

† See "Travels," vol. iii., p. 301.

‡ The letter is reproduced on the opposite page, from a contemporary copy of the original. The circle indicates the place of the seal.

§ From copies of letters hitherto unpublished and now in the possession of the author.

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you here, I said not a word in my last letters about a project that has been in my mind ever since I have heard that Dr. Meryon is to leave you and thinks of settling somewhere in Italy. My miserable indolence about writing grows upon me every day, and besides many notes and memorandums, which it was almost a duty in me to have made in my travels, the event of my poor old uncle's death is likely to give occasion to a good deal of business as soon as letters from England reach me. Happily, my health, even under all the disadvantages of change of climate and fatigue, is very little in need of medical advice, and my eyes are much recovered, but I am in real and almost daily need of an amanuensis. If you and the doctor could make the arrangement suit you, I should be very glad to engage him, nominally as my physician, but really in the capacity rather of secretary. I will carry him through the islands by Smyrna to Constantinople, and thence through Greece and the Ionian Isles, and any parts of Italy where he may choose to be set down—I mean of the Roman State, for I shall hardly visit Naples (delightful as it is) a third time.

"I enclose you the note which I have written to the doctor, which, should the thing altogether be disagreeable to you, you may suppress altogether and say nothing about it. On the other hand, should you be able to spare him so soon, and think it for his advantage, I should wish him to set out immediately, bag and baggage, for Latakia, where I hope to embark quite in the beginning of next month. I suppose, embarking at Sayda or Beyrout, with a tolerable wind, we might make the journey in about three or four days. I am on the point of setting out on my way to Antakieh, where I shall spend a few days with Mr. Barker, who is to meet me. Now, remember, you are not to scold me if you do not like the proposition I make about Dr. Meryon, but burn the letter and say nothing about it, and whatever you do I rest perfectly satisfied. I have been spending two days in the mountain, and have been plundering the cedars. I have brought down with me a small log, of which I propose to make some little box or cabinet, and a little sack with about twenty of the cones, which I hope to sow in England. You will do me the greatest kindness in the world if you will let the servant who carries over your horse take charge of them

214 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

and deliver them to my father, warning him (the servant) that the log is not meant to burn nor the cones to be eaten by the way. If you would have them sent to Acre, and will let the consul in whose charge they are left know it, he has my directions to do so. And, by the by, when we are both respectable old people, we will sit at Kingston Hall under the shade of our cedars and fancy ourselves, in spite of the difference of climate, upon Lebanon.

"Now, as for the drawings, do according to your judgment. I must confess that I am fussy about them. If you think that the servant can protect them from the harpies at Malta, or that anything you can write will protect them, do me the kindness to let it be so. On the other hand, should the doctor choose to come with me, and you accede to that arrangement, he may as well bring the cases with him, and we will send them by a frigate from Syria. You desire in one of your letters to have my hand that we part in peace. In peace, my dear Lady Hester! In friendship, I hope, so long as we live. I long to see you after you have been in France. You will hate the French so cordially.

"With every kind wish, believe me, most faithfully yours,

"WM. JOHN BANKES.

"The old consul here (who seems to be in a dying way) desires his respects to you and excuses himself from writing." *

The enclosed note to Meryon was as follows :

"What it requires half a dozen sheets to put in writing is settled by word of mouth in five minutes, which is the reason why, in my last letter to Lady Hester, I said nothing of a proposition that I had already resolved to make, supposing always that I was to find you here, in which I have been greatly disappointed.

"You are, I hear, upon the point of quitting this country and think of spending at least some time in Italy. I am myself precisely in the same predicament. I have done with Syria, and am turning towards Italy; not, indeed, by the same direct route, but, as I hope and intend to be expeditious in what remains

* From Dr. Meryon's MSS.

of my tour, the loss of time will not be great. I shall pass by the islands to Smyrna, from thence by the road to Constantinople, and on through Greece and the Ionian Islands across the Adriatic. I shall winter in Italy, making my way by Venice and Milan and Bologna to Florence, and perhaps (a third time) to Rome.

"Now, if you like to be my companion in this route, leaving to me to pay all your expenses whatsoever, I shall think myself fortunate. For your medical skill I hope to have no great occasion, but I believe I should keep your pen in pretty constant employ, as I begin to have serious thoughts of drawing up some small memorandums of the strange places and strange people that I have seen, and the office might not be quite unentertaining to you.

"I mean to have an interpreter, in the mere capacity of a servant, so that either he or Antonio can wait upon you and the other upon me, as I do not like multiplying a suite.

"I am afraid I can give you no great time to consider of this plan or to make arrangements, and, as you have been for some time preparing to set out, it will probably not be necessary. Should it suit you, I should be glad if you would meet me, with all your effects, at Latakia about the first of next month (July), where we will embark. Make no ceremony about refusing me if the thing be disagreeable to you, and believe me, faithfully yours,

"WM. JOHN BANKES." *

Lady Hester resented Mr. Bankes's attempt to engage Dr. Meryon's services, and did not disguise her feelings. When she wrote to the physician she dictated the letter to her secretary Beaudin "from one village to another on Mt. Lebanon," on June 23rd, 1816:

"I cannot dictate a long letter, but I enclose the two from Mr. Bankes. Do exactly as you like, and set off to-morrow, if you think it will answer to you.

"You may take what money Anne † has and £50 of the consul

* From Dr. Meryon's MSS.

† Mrs. Fry.

at Tripoli or Latakia, and when I get to Antioch I will make Mr. Barker send the rest that I owe you in a very exact mercantile way through Constantinople by the first Tartar that goes. I suppose if you take £100 there, that will do, and you shall take the rest in bills upon Coutts.

"Your vanity, I know, will jump at travelling with a rich man, and few other considerations will come into your head, though he estimates your services at the bread you eat. I think you would find plenty of mortifications in store. You are of such a strange disposition, there is no such thing as giving you any advice, nor have you sufficient judgment to act without and know your own interest.

"If you do not wish to go, write and tell him so; if you do, I should think it advisable for you to say that under £100 a quarter, with all your expenses paid, you could not think of undertaking what he wished. I mention this to keep you up in future, for he is a man who will go about saying that you scribbled your way home for your passage. If he had offered to take you and not put anything upon you, it would all have been very well: but I must now consider it very impertinent as well as very mean.

"You will see by my letter that he wants his drawings. Pack them all up, and send them off with a *muker* [muleteer] to Latakia. It appears that he has never received my letter, in which I say I shall have nothing to do with them.

"And then, if he is determined to have you, there is another consideration: he will send for you to join him either at Cyprus or at Rhodes, so that as far as I can judge there is nothing to be gained but a great deal of trouble and little profit. This is my way of seeing it, but do what you think proper, with or without any reference to me in any way, and, if you go, you need not even come and take leave of me, because you have not a moment to spare. The *muker* must be at Latakia by the end of the month, and, as his load is light, he may very well do it. He can get on by himself; there is no danger, now there are so many troops upon the road.

"I have left my letter open for you to read. Close it with some antique that you have never used, if you have no wafer, which will be best. You see that he is now trying to coax me

over. He has some reason for that. He has met with a set-down somewhere; but I never blow hot and blow cold—I have done with him.

"I cannot say any more, for my head is not in a proper state to think to-day. If no *makers* are to be had with mules, send asses, for I will not keep one of his things another day in my house—impertinent fellow that he is! But he shall learn who I am. I am not an angel of kindness, like Mr. Pitt, or to be talked over at pleasure, so off with frescoes, drawings and packages." *

In spite of her apparent willingness that he should go, Lady Hester gave Meryon little choice but to refuse Mr. Bankes's offer, which he did in a letter from Abra on June 24th, 1816.

"I had left Meshmushy," he wrote, "where Lady Hester now is, for Abra, yesterday, on business, and, your packet of letters being forwarded to her at that place, the one for me which was enclosed therein did not reach me until this morning.

"You desire me to answer your proposal without reserve, and I shall make use of the liberty you give me. I beg leave to return you my sincere thanks for the honour you have done me in inviting me to accompany you from this country to Italy, and I am not insensible to the advantage and entertainment I should have derived from the employment you destined for me. Although I have no sort of intention of fixing on the Continent, still such a tour could not be otherwise than agreeable; but, since I am permitted to speak frankly, the terms you propose and the short time you give me to prepare myself must prevent my acceding to your wishes. In leaving Lady Hester (if I should do so) I shall never think of settling in Italy, but I do not hold it to be consistent with my duty to quit her Ladyship at all, whilst she is out of Europe, unless she should insist upon it. Had, therefore, your proposal been such as I could, without undervaluing myself, have accepted, still it would have remained with Lady Hester to have reasoned me out of my reluctance to leave her in these parts without medical aid.

* From Dr. Meryon's MSS.

218 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

"I forward you two letters from Lady Hester; one I brought down with me from Meshmushy two days ago, but found no immediate opportunity for dispatching it to you; the other was sent down this morning. I likewise forward you the tin cases of drawings—that in the brown paper is the one which was left in my care. Her Ladyship desires me to send by the same conveyance the cedar pines, the case of fresco paintings, and the other parcel.

"I have the honour to be, dear Sir,

"Your obedt. hble. servt.,

"C. L. MERYON." *

Meanwhile Mr. Buckingham was at Damascus, without baggage, not having with him so much as a change of linen, and wearing the dress of a Bedouin Arab. Lady Hester wrote to Mâlem Salomon of that city the following letter of credit:

"Monsieur Buckingham, negociant anglois consierable a eù le malheur de perdre sa fortune dans un grand batiment qui a fait naufrage, et qui est à present sur son voyage aux Indes par terre, a voulu voir un peu de ce pays en passant. Il a rencontré Mons. Bankes (un voyageur d'ancienne famille, fils d'un Membre de Parliament, déjà reccomandé a vous par votre frère, le distingué Maalem Haim, et par moi), à Nazareth. Le susdit Mr. Bankes étant très étourdi a éloigné tout le baggage de Mr. Buckingham: et lui, Mr. Buckingham se trouvant sans argent actuellement a Damas je vous prie de le compter trois cens piastres pour moi, que je prierai Maalem Haim de vous rembourser quand j'enverrai un billet de change a Acre dans dix jours. Pardonnez la liberté que je prens de vous ennuyer de mes petites affaires. Mais je serai toujours prête a vous rendre les mêmes services quand le bon Dieu le mettra dans mon pouvoir." †

Mr. Bankes had left Mar Elias only a few days when Buckingham arrived in the middle of the night, attired in

* From Dr. Meryon's MSS.

† *Ibid.*

his Bedouin dress, in which "he looked very much like a Mahometan." *

His reception was far more cordial than that of his friend. On leaving, he expressed his gratitude and respect to his hostess in unmeasured terms of approval, and later he honoured her by inscribing one of his works as follows :

"To the Right Honourable Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope, one of the brightest ornaments of her sex and station, this volume of travels in Mesopotamia, performed soon after quitting her hospitable residence in Syria, is gratefully dedicated, as a memento of the high respect and unaffected esteem of her obliged and faithful friend, the Author."

The account of his visit to her appears in "Travels among the Arab Tribes inhabiting the countries East of Syria and Palestine" (1825), pp. 410-432. After discussing the reasons which induced Lady Hester to take up her abode in Syria and describing from recollection the interior of the Convent of Mar Elias, the author added many details about Lady Hester's mode of life and occupation.

"The domestic establishment of Lady Hester consisted at this period," he wrote, "of an English physician, Dr. Meryon, who lived in a separate house at a distance of less than a mile; an English attendant, Miss Williams, and an English house-keeper, Mrs. Fry; a Levantine secretary of French descent, from Aleppo, and a small number of male and female servants of the country for the ordinary purposes of labour. The fondness for beautiful horses which this lady passionately entertained was judiciously but not ostentatiously enjoyed by the possession of a small stud of Arabs of the purest and most celebrated races, and on these she occasionally took such exercise only as her health required.

"The mode of life passed by Lady Hester Stanhope at this convent had nothing peculiar in it except, perhaps, that it was more rational than the mode observed by the more fashionable

* "Travels," vol. iii., p. 303.

of her own sex in particular, at home. She rose generally about eight, walked in the flower garden, or read, until ten, breakfasted on tea and coffee in the English manner—so much so, indeed, that there was no distinction between her breakfast-table and one in England, except that finer fruits were often produced there than it is usual to see in London. An extensive correspondence, which her Ladyship appeared to maintain with persons of distinction in all parts of Europe, and even in India, generally occupied her pen, or that of her secretary, who wrote from dictation, for several hours in the middle of the day. . . . A walk or a ride on horseback was generally indulged in before dinner, which was always served soon after sunset. . . . The evening was almost invariably passed in conversation. . . . The early association with men eminent for their talents, as well as their power, the habit of intense observation on all passing events, the abundant opportunities afforded by years of travel to apply these habits to the utmost advantage; all these, added to a remarkable union of frankness and dignity, gave a peculiar charm to the conversation of this highly accomplished and amiable woman. . . .

"In person, Lady Hester Stanhope is rather above the usual standard of female height, with regular and delicately formed features, a soft blue eye,* fair and pale complexion, an expression of habitual pensiveness and tranquil resignation, which was rarely disturbed except when her countenance now and then lighted up with the indignant feelings that always followed the recital of some deed of cruelty or oppression. . . ."

Buckingham concluded his long account of Lady Hester with many expressions of admiration and gratitude.

"When the period approached for my quitting Mar Elias, I felt extreme regret," he wrote, "for I had scarcely ever before concentrated so much of highly intellectual pleasure within so short a space of time."

Buckingham left the convent on April 19th, and made his way through Beirut to Tarabolus, from which village

* This is hardly consistent with other descriptions.

he wrote, on April 22nd, to Meryon to thank him for his kindness during his illness at Mar Elias :

"It is merely to assure you that I shall not soon forget your kind attentions during my stay at Mar Elias that I intrude a note upon you after so short an absence, and not to give you any detail of my movements, which would interest you but little. I felt it necessary to halt a day at Beirut, and have unavoidably been detained two days here, tho' had I not been in some measure limited to time I should have prolonged my stay at each place. . . .

"Remember my injunctions about the Memoirs on the Cave—if it is not preserved from obscurity by being given to the world through the medium which I proposed to you or through any others, my importunities will annoy you while living and my ghost haunt you when dead. I shall allow you to repose in quiet, however, until I reach Aleppo.

"Forgive any rudeness which there may appear to lie in my pressing this subject so hard upon you, and believe me,

"My dear Sir,

"Very truly Yours,

"J. S. BUCKINGHAM." *

With reference to the cave, Dr. Meryon wrote on April 20th to a friend in Cairo :

"Nous venons de perdre Monsr. Bankes et Monsieur Buckingham. Ils parcoururent la Syrie avec un enthousiasme qui demontre à quel point ils se sentent frappés de ses beautés. J'ai eû le plaisir de faire voir à ces Messieurs, pendant leur séjour chez Milédi, une chambre sepulchrale souterraine, qui fut decouverte par hazard aux environs de Sayde en 1814, quelques jours avant le passage du pauvre Monsieur Boutin, qui fut la voir lui-même. Elle est ornée de peintures tant sur les murailles que sur le plafond; d'un gout qui ne cede en rien à celles des villes de Pompeii et d'Herculaneum, s'il faut croire à Monsr. Bankes, qui les a vues toutes les deux. Milédi pourtant est d'une

* From Dr. Meryon's MSS.

opinion tout à fait différente, les jugeant inférieures, tant par rapport à l'exécution, que dans leur époque, qui est vers la décadence des beaux arts. Mons. Bankes n'a pas laissé échapper une si belle occasion d'ajouter encore aux ouvrages de son pinceau." *

Two interesting letters written by Lady Hester to Buckingham at this period have been preserved. They throw some light on her political ideas in 1816, as well as on the misfortune that overtook Mr. Bankes, and her view of the part that Bruce played in the affair of Lavalette.

The plague was at Rhodes, she wrote, and she feared she must give up going there; the state of France was also quite shocking, but all parties tried to keep the *truth a secret*. Still she had means of knowing everything. She felt very serious alarm about England, for Alexander was a treacherous friend, and the reputation of Napoleon rose with the English army in proportion as the men had opportunities of witnessing how vastly contemptible the other party made themselves, and how universally they were detested in France. The French ministers, she declared, had made serious complaints of the avidity with which everything which ever belonged to the Emperor, and every description of statue or picture of him, had been bought up by the English, particularly by the soldiers. She was afraid of the consequences of all this. She knew that the Duke of W. was detested, and not popular now even with his countrymen. In short, all seemed to her to be party and confusion, without plan and without principle. Mr. Salt had recently arrived in Egypt, and had been appointed E. I. Agent,† of which she was vastly glad, as she thought it would put it in his power to serve Mr.

* From an MS. letter in the possession of the author.

† Henry Salt, appointed British Consul-General in Egypt on May 2nd, 1815. He left London at the close of August and reached Alexandria on March 27th, 1816. See "The Life of Henry Salt," vol. i., pp. 406 and 451.

Buckingham, which she felt sure he would do with pleasure, since he had turned out to be the honourable character she took him for. She assured Buckingham that she would set all things right with Salt, as he had, with the greatest politeness and liberality, expressed his approbation of the line of conduct she had pursued in Syria, and desired to be upon terms of intimacy and confidence with her, adding at the same time the assurance of his wish to be serviceable in any way she might choose to employ him. This was very unlike the mean jealousy of many others she could name, who, when they could say no other harm of her, stamped her with poverty, thinking they would thereby hurt her and lower her in the eyes of persons in the neighbourhood. But in this they were mistaken, and that is just what she wished should be *known*. She wished to shine by no borrowed light, and she wished no one to imagine she had anything to carry her through life but her talents and her integrity. Yet to those who did her justice she felt that she must be grateful and at the same time have sense enough to be aware that they were rather forwarding than defeating their own projects by doing so. "Do not believe me vain either, because I thus speak candidly of myself," she exclaimed. This put her in mind of what one of the most sensible Turks said who sat upon the Divan at Constantinople. He had spoken of Napoleon in her presence. "It is not," said the Turk, "that Napoleon is *so great*, but other crowned heads are *so little*." He then went on to explain his opinions, and he put facts together, with a mixture of simplicity and talent, which would, she considered, have done credit to one of the Philosophers of Antiquity. "It is not that I am *so remarkable*, but other English travellers are so inconsistent," she continued. Then she told him of an absurd scrape Mr. Bankes had got into by disregarding her advice about dress, when he called upon Achmet Bey at Damascus.

A German quack doctor had recommended himself to some of the great men at Damascus by having successfully tapped a man who was suffering from dropsy, but having given some pills of "God knows what" to one of Kimel Bey's favourite servants, the man vomited for four hours, and was brought to death's door. Then the quack was expelled from Damascus. The quack had been to Sayda, but Lady Hester had not seen him. Mr. Bankes's dress was so unlike a gentleman's that he was mistaken for him, and it became very difficult to convince persons that he was not the quack doctor. The confidential secretary of a great man who had lately been at Sayda still seemed *confident* that Mr. Bankes could not be a gentleman.

Knowing, as she did, the consequences of every word or action in Syria Lady Hester had said more to Mr. Bankes and Mr. Buckingham than to others upon subjects upon which persons were in general allowed to be free agents. She feared, she said, that she might have offended them both, but her motives had been pure, and she had reason on her side. Those who did not like to hear the *truth* which she always spoke openly to them had better have nothing to say to her, she declared, as no advantage could arise to either parties. She hoped that what had already happened would teach her friend Buckingham to be very exact in the way of business, and in all money transactions, and that he would have completely made it up with Mr. Bankes before leaving Aleppo. Bankes had once been so cheated by "an English Sir Somebody Callender," that she did not wonder he was upon his guard, and that every little thing awakened his suspicions. As it was always a good principle to return good for evil, she hoped that if it was in Buckingham's power upon his return to be useful to his brothers in placing them in an agency, that he would not allow the recollections of the *past* to dwell upon his mind. The *idea*





JAMES SILK BUCKINGHAM (1786-1855)

During his Travels in the East.

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that this would be his attitude was the highest encomium she could pass upon his liberality and goodness of heart.

She hoped to hear of his safe arrival at Bagdad. She asked him to enclose his letters to Mr. Banks. Upon his arrival in Egypt he would learn her whereabouts from Mr. Salt, and presently he would receive a letter from her. Then she apologised for what she called "scolding him a good deal," but she meant it entirely for his good. The scolding had not diminished the interest she felt in a person who had held up against misfortune with so much fortitude, and had made so many praiseworthy efforts to place himself in a respectable situation in life.

She added a postscript to ask him not to forget the memorandum about Heshbon, and that part of the desert, as she desired that its geographical situation should be clearly explained, because a beautiful horse she had in her possession came from the very tribes who wandered in those parts. She was going to call the horse Abd El Hatne when she presented him to the Duke. She had set her heart upon a beautiful little Koelen mare for her own riding, but the mare had cast her foal "as a punishment upon the beast of a Druse, who made so much fuss about parting with her"; at least he had demanded from Lady Hester three times the price he had given for the mare.

She was glad that Buckingham had a horse that suited him. She had feared it was a fat, puffed-out animal, "like some of those the Guards of Governors often ride." Had it been so it might have failed on the journey Buckingham had before him. She asked him to send her any seeds of flowers or shrubs which struck him as beautiful. They would be very acceptable to give to her friend Sir Joseph Banks, with whom she carried on a frequent correspondence, and who was "very curious in plants," and had a fine hothouse and greenhouse.

Looking at an Army List Lady Hester had found that Colonel Murray of the dragoons was at Bengal. She had given Mr. Silk Buckingham an introduction to this soldier, and now feared that they might not meet, as Buckingham was going to Bombay, and that it was hardly worth while his sending on the letter, although she would have welcomed the opportunity of hearing of the welfare of a very honest and amiable gentleman. Colonel Murray had been a great favourite with Mr. Pitt when he was "a youngster" quartered at Walmer Barracks, and had often visited at Walmer Castle. She asked Buckingham to present her compliments to Sir E. Nepean if he were still at Bombay. She also asked him to explain the Bruce affair, as it was stated inaccurately in the newspapers. She was referring, of course, to Bruce's share in the escape of Lavalette, and she declared, as she no doubt believed to be true, that Bruce had known neither Lavalette nor his wife, but after the latter had succeeded in getting her husband out of prison in disguise, he threw himself upon Bruce's protection. Bruce had applied to Sir R. Wilson and Hutchinson of the Guards to form a plan to save "this poor persecuted being," and the three together managed to escape safely out of France.*

This letter was sent by Mr. Silk Buckingham on December 4th, 1826, to Sir Charles Forbes, whose daughter had requested him to give her Lady Hester's autograph. He received another letter in May, 1816, from Mar' Elias, when he was at Aleppo. It contained "a little P.S. for Hady Achmet."

Louis Dernon, whom she had just ordered to give some money to his wife, said that if Hady Achmet should go to Bagdad, he would do well to bring with him some Bagdad common shawls to sell at Sayda, those which were striped orange brown for the lower Turks and Druses, and some

* See p. 175.

smaller ones for the waist and little square ones which children wear for turbans, and the women wear for zinars. They sold for seven or eight piastres apiece in Sayda and could be bought for three or four at Bagdad. Also Kafias of a common and fine sort would be saleable, as there were few to be had in Sayda. Bagdad muslin shawls, she informed him, came in plenty by the caravans. Bagdad "coel" for the eyes would also sell well. She gave all these details because she hoped they would be useful to the poor man whose conduct had delighted her. What he had said of Selim was very true. He was the best creature in the world, and the warmest friend. She was very sorry that Buckingham had not made his acquaintance. She was sure he would have been quite delighted with him. Achmet could tell him that both he and his father had a real affection for her, and that they would do anything in the world to be useful to her. She hoped Achmet took good care of the horses. If Buckingham had any letter for his wife and would send it to her by the return of the messenger, she promised to forward it in the first packet she sent to the Horse Guards, and promised it should cost her nothing, however *fat* it might be. She informed Buckingham that the Pacha of Damascus intended to join in the attack upon the Ansarie mountains, and that that was the real cause of the delay. She asked him not to say a word of this at Aleppo because what she did she did completely. "'La Reine et bergère,' as he used to style me," she concluded, "has sworn to avenge the death of her poor friend."

To this letter the following note by Buckingham is appended :

"The first portion of the letter refers to an Arab servant of mine about whom Lady Hester felt interested from his having served her faithfully. The latter mention of 'her poor friend,'

whose death she determines to revenge, refers to a Colonel Boutin of the French Engineers who after the abdication of Bonaparte came to travel in the East and whom I met at Cairo after his return from the Temple of Jupiter Ammon in Lybia. He passed a day with Lady Hester at Mar Elias, and was advised by her to avoid going into the mountains of Ansarie near Latakia, which he promised. He broke his pledge, however, and followed the impulse of his curiosity and was murdered there. The French Ambassador caring little about him, and the Consul in Syria having no powers, Lady Hester obtained a quota of 500 men from the Pachas of Acre and Damascus and after great search the murderers were brought to light and executed."

Lady Hester was not only up in arms against the local administration of affairs, but she was indignant about the development of European events, more especially with regard to English policy. It was at this time that she gave energetic vent to her feelings in a characteristic letter to the Marquis (afterwards Duke) of Buckingham, in which she abused her native country :

"MY DEAR COUSIN,—For years, in writing to you, I have been silent on politics, but as it is probable that this letter will *reach* you, I avail myself of this opportunity to give you my real opinions.

"You cannot doubt that a woman of my character and (I presume to say) of my understanding must have held in contempt and aversion all the statesmen of the present day, whose unbounded ignorance and duplicity have brought ruin on France, have spread their own shame through all Europe, and have exposed themselves not only to the ridicule, but to the curses of present and future generations. One great mind, one single enlightened statesman, whose virtues had equalled his talents, was all that was wanting to effect at this unexampled period the welfare of all Europe by taking advantage of events the most extraordinary that have ever occurred in any era. That moment is gone by : an age of terror and perfidy has succeeded. Horrible events will take place, and those who find themselves farthest

Hatred of England

229

from the scenes which will be acted may consider themselves the most fortunate.

"Cease, therefore, to torment me: I will not live in Europe, even were I, in flying from it, compelled to beg my bread. Once only will I go to France, to see you and James, but only that once. I will not be a martyr for nothing. The granddaughter of Lord Chatham, the niece of the illustrious Pitt, feels herself blush as she writes that she was born in England—that England who has made her accursed gold the counterpoise to justice. . . ." *

* "Travels," vol. iii., pp. 304-5.

CHAPTER XXVI

DR. MERYON LEAVES THE EAST (1817)

DR. MERYON'S patience was exhausted. He wrote to his family from Mar Elias on September 6th, 1816 :

"My last dated Christmas day, 1815, was sent in the hope that it would be the last I should have occasion to write from this country. But nearly another year has past over my head and I am still here, languishing for home like a mother sick boy, as I believe I always was, and feel I ever shall be. The person who was sent to England last June year by Lady Hester has not yet returned, and consequently there is yet no one to replace me : so that for the reasons I have so many times had occasion to assign I am tied down to remain some months longer. But the very moment of his arrival I shall pack up, and make the best of my way home. . . .

"It is fortunate that Nature, when she cast me forth into the world, put a strong proportion of apathy into my temperament, so that the resignation to the will of Providence which you gain from philosophy, others from religion, some from wine, and so on, I come at by the surer path of indifference to whatever happens which, whilst it steels me against the ills of existence deadens in me like the sense of it's pleasures. I thought I had made myself into so round a ball that the shafts of Fortune would always glance off let them be never so vexatious : and so I think they would, if it were not, that, when I rolled myself up, not willing to shut up every avenue to sentiment, I left two cracks, through which I let in Filial affection and Friendship." *

Several events happened before the Doctor's departure.

* From the original MSS., September 8th and 15th, 1816.

The Princess of Wales was travelling to Jerusalem, and Lady Hester, partly to avoid receiving her, took a journey to Antioch, ostensibly for the purpose of settling her money affairs. After her return in November, she gave an interview to M. Firmin Didot, who published an account of it in "*Notes d'un voyage fait dans le Levant en 1816 et 1817.*"

"Milady," he wrote, "received me with affability and talked for a long time on the politics of Europe." She told him also why she had adopted masculine Turkish dress, and her adventures at Palmyra, Ascalon, etc. She informed him that it was her intention to found a new religion, which she described as an alliance between Mahometanism and Christianity, but foreseeing the difficulties of this undertaking, she had renounced the plan.*

On November 15th a messenger arrived to say that Georgio Dallegio was returning, bringing with him the surgeon, and twenty-seven packing cases of presents for Lady Hester's friends and acquaintances. "Mr. Dallegio and Dr. Newbery, my successor, arrived in Syria the end of November. I left it in January," wrote Meryon from Cyprus, on February 2nd, 1817.†

Lady Hester sent a communication to General Oakes by him :

"Mount Lebanon, Jan: 5, 1817:

"I was so happy at receiving your letter by Georgio," she wrote, "for it was so long since I had heard from you, and never ceased to feel anxious about your health, as well as about all which interests you. This letter will be given you by Dr. Meryon: He will have so much to tell you about me, and his travels in these parts, that I shall not allude to either one or the other subject.

"As for that levity and inconsequence with which you reproach some of our young men, it is much to be lamented. Real

* See "*Notes d'un voyage fait dans le Levant en 1816 et 1817,*" pp. 223-5. (Paris.)

† MS. letter.

wildness can scarcely be deemed a fault in youth, and most particularly in those who have no sort of restraint put upon their actions; but neglect, trifling conduct, saying more than a person means, is quite another thing, and very contemptible in my opinion, which may be a severe one; but if all these things are looked over and tolerated in young men who ought to set an example in society, what will the world come to at last? . . .

"I should by no means wish you to put yourself into Dr. Meryon's hands without other medical advice; but yet he might be in some little degree useful to you perhaps in stating how many strong men in this country live upon very little meat, how well they are, what exercise they take, and how much their appearance is that of health." *

After the Doctor's departure Lady Hester lived more quietly even than before. In April she received the news of her father's death,† and of the accession of her half-brother to the title. She had long been on unfriendly terms with the once "incomparable Mahon," and, when he became Lord Stanhope, she wrote to him accusing him of ingratitude, a letter which made a breach between them which was never healed.

In a postscript she informed him that she intended to remove any sums of money coming to her from the estate, and asked that such amount might be placed in the hands of her banker, Coutts. To her brother James she wrote, informing him what was to be done with £10,000 which had been left to her in 1809 on the death of her brother Charles.

For a time her pecuniary prospects looked brighter,

* *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843, vol. 67, pp. 326-7.

† Lord Stanhope died on December 15th, 1816. Lady Hester was not mentioned in his will. "On his separation from Mr. Pitt, his family preferred the patronage of the minister to the paternal roof; and he has been frequently heard to say, that, as they had chosen to be saddled on the public purse, they must take the consequences."—*The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1816, vol. 86, p. 564.

but it was not in Lady Hester's nature to economise, and she believed that plenty of money was coming to her through legacies. From this date onwards she became involved deeply and more deeply in debt.

In October, 1817, she was requested by the Hon. Charles Leonard Irby and James Mangles, who were then travelling in the East, to receive them. They waited on her at Mar Elias with "a letter from Mr. Salt, a packet of English letters from Acre, and a book from Jaffa. . . ."

But Lady Hester was at Castle Jeba, in the mountains, and wrote to say that she had made her mind up not to receive any more Englishmen, with the exception of officers of the army and navy, "all fine fellows, as she was pleased to express herself." *

From this time onwards she chose her visitors with infinite care. Her correspondence diminished in quantity, but she still wrote to "one of the fine fellows," her relative, General Grenville, whom she thought "about the best man in the world." † These letters are interesting because they are almost the last of her communications with England. In the first one she refers to her intention of writing no more to her family. She also refers to Dr. Meryon's departure and suggests sending away the faithful Miss Williams. The letters reveal the mystic and philosophical turn of mind which now grew upon Lady Hester until it became her second nature.

Only a portion of the first letter is in existence. It is undated, but the watermark is 1814, a date that is misleading,

* "Travels in Egypt and Nubia, Syria and Asia Minor, during 1817 and 1818, p. 201. By Charles Leonard Irby and James Mangles. (London, 1823.)

† She told an anecdote of him. "One morning," she said to Meryon, "whilst General Grenville was staying at Stowe there came a letter with his address on the cover, and 'Montrose' in the corner. The general, not being intimate with the duke, said—'What's this? Let's see: what can make the duke write to me?' On opening the letter, out came about fifty fleas, all jumping up to his face." The General ordered his postchaise and left Stowe at once."—"Memoirs," vol. iii., p. 179.

as the letter cannot have been written until about seven years later, perhaps even more than that. Lady Hester referred to the manner in which General Grenville's "master," whom she did not name, had been allowed to be treated. She thought it disgraceful. Had she been a man, she said, they should tremble to *right* and *left*, for both parties were equally infamous *à son sujet*. The beautiful horses she had once intended for the personage in question she would now probably sell to an Emperor. Had Mr. Pitt lived, she knew he would have been glad to send her a frigate for a canary bird, had he thought it would have pleased the General's friend, and because also he would have approved her having made it her study and amusement to procure what she knew to be most rare of its kind, for one who ought to command the affection and services great and small of all who knew him well. She thought that her brother James had made himself "impune" by his own imprudence and overvaluing his own talents, character and importance. "He has himself plucked out of his own breast," she exclaimed, "that sting of independence so deadly to all dastardly, venal minds." She believed that either Charles or she herself would have filled James's sacred post better. They would have thought only of one thing! They might have made "fewer pains and less poetry," but they would have made "more weigh" to any essential object, the means of becoming the most useful to those they served. James she believed to be better than most men, but in her estimation he fell far short of the character she expected, and hoped he would be. She considered that he had clipped his wings by having turned a deaf ear to her reflections, and to her earnest entreaties upon many subjects.

Then she apologised to the General because she could not be more explicit, but she felt that time would unfold what her pen could not now or hereafter to James. Whether

she rose or fell, she vowed she would never forget the General, nor ever cease to love him, but she declared she would write no more either to him or to others of her family. She begged him to remember her.

She would refuse to see James she said, even though he arrived the very next day and begged to be received. Also she wished the General to understand that her letter was only intended for himself and his brother, and not for a family party.

Lady Hester went on to inform General Grenville that she had decided to send away Dr. Meryon in order that there might be no means of communication in the family, and a few months later "poor little Williams" was to follow him.

Lady Hester had every reason to speak well of her companion, but she did not regard "one little mild weak creature" as enough in a country like Syria, and she would not have her made a drudge of. She thought Miss Williams deserved a better fate than following her mistress through good or ill fortune in wilds and wastes, and as a proof that she really had regard for her, by a codicil to her will added in 1819, she left her sufficient money to pay her passage home.

The Arabs say "the fate of man is written upon his forehead," continued Lady Hester in her letter to General Grenville, and what God had written she did not believe that man could efface. Therefore, she concluded with a sigh, "with all due resignation I follow my star which will lead me to that destiny decreed above." And she begged her "kind friend and best relation" to believe her "with increasing affection, ever yrs. H. L. S."

Her second letter to Grenville was dated September 9th, 1821. It was written in time of plague and other difficulties.

"After a storm a calm," she began, rejoicing that there

was a calm at the moment; but she had every reason to suppose that things would become worse than ever before long. Within three weeks she hoped to have collected everything she could want for a whole year, sufficient indeed to supply the unhappy and destitute who had fled their homes, and who could not live in the open air or upon what they could pick up. She could not dwell to General Grenville upon the scenes of misery she had witnessed. "God is great," she cried, and she believed devoutly that her energy would suffice her, for she did not care what sacrifice she made to serve humanity.

She enclosed one more little note for the General's son, the last, she called it, because there was every reason to suppose that communication would be cut off by sea and by land. She asked Grenville not to quote what she said to anyone lest it should get into the newspapers. It would have been her wish to have silence observed upon all Syrian events, if it were not for the fact that she was in a measure obliged to account for what many might regard as extravagance, but what she looked upon as prudence, and only doing her duty. "A fine scandal upon my family," she went on in her proudest manner, "if I were obliged to beg my bread." Yet she believed there would be many begging, and begging in vain, if they had not foresight to provide for an evil hour. She hoped to provide not only for herself but for many others. If she outlived the storm, the great storm, God would provide for her, she knew. At least if she begged then, she would beg very cheerfully, having made every possible exertion and sacrifice. And, having none left to make, she would be tranquil at least. She asked the General to forgive her scribble as she had not a moment's leisure. She began at sunrise, and worked away until two hours after midnight. She felt vastly *worn*, but her *spirit* was always the same. She often thought of the

General and his dear brother, who, she knew, would be a great favourite in the East, where *foreheads* and marks were observed. She remembered his *forehead* perfectly. It was before her eyes while she wrote, as well as the Duke's eyebrows, or rather the sign between his eyebrows which was not a *common one*. "There are men in the East," she said, "so learned that if they only look with attention at a man's countenance, they can tell exactly what he is capable of and what is his disposition and his *fate*." Lavater, she considered, was nothing to them.

CHAPTER XXVII

A VISIT FROM MADDEN

RELIABLE information about Lady Hester is scarce in the years which followed upon Dr. Meryon's return to England and her decision to break off all communication with home. The Doctor did not make as much use of his liberty as he might have done, considering how anxious he had been to leave Syria.

"During April and May, 1818," he wrote in his Diary, "I was residing in Warwick Street, Charing Cross, employing myself chiefly in doing commissions for Lady Hester Stanhope. By means of her introduction I now visited occasionally General Grenville, Lord Glastonbury, Sir Hildebrand Oakes, and others.

"*June.* At the beginning of this month having completed Lady Hester Stanhope's commissions, I found myself at liberty to pursue my own inclinations.

"*July.* During this month I made up my mind to rejoin Lady Hester Stanhope. This as far as regarded my settling in life was utterly destructive of it. I was yearly losing ground from not having passed my examination at the College of Physicians in order to become a fellow.

"*Saturday 15th. August.* I was much occupied with business for Lady Hester Stanhope and found it impossible to bestow the necessary time for preparation for the examination of the College of Physicians. I resolved therefore for the present to abandon it." *

In 1819 Dr. Newbery, who had succeeded Meryon as

* From a MS. in the British Museum.

Lady Hester's physician, grew tired of the East, or perhaps wearied of his post in Lady Hester's household, and returned to England. Lady Hester asked Meryon to come back to her.

"I again revisited Syria," he wrote in his preface to the "Memoirs," "but I found that her ladyship had in the meanwhile completely familiarised herself with the usages of the East, conducting her establishment entirely in the Turkish manner, and adopting even much of their medical empiricism. Under these circumstances, and at her own suggestion, I again bade her adieu, as I then believed for the last time." *

Two or three years later Meryon decided to make another trip to the East. Owing to delay in the transmission of letters, a misunderstanding occurred, and the Doctor, in doubt as to what he ought to do, took an engagement in London for five years in the household of Sir Gilbert Heathcote, and afterwards, receiving Lady Hester's command to join her, apologised for not being able to carry out her wishes.

On July 30th, 1823, she wrote in answer to his expressions of regret :

"I shall not either scold or reproach you ; I only hope that the line you have taken will turn out in the end to your advantage. I confess I am sorry and mortified that, after having rendered me several services, you are still in a situation so little independent." †

In the meantime she had established herself at Djoun, which became her permanent home.

An amusing and absurd account of her arrival there is told in "La Journal d'un Voyage au Levant." ‡ She was

* "Memoirs," vol. i., pp. 3-4.

† *Ibid.*, p. 6.

‡ Paris, 1848. Vol. iii., pp. 418-21—a work which must not be confused with that of Firmin-Didot, which has a similar title.

pleased with the house and gardens, and accepted the proprietor's invitation to dinner. After dinner she smoked.

The proprietor, a Christian merchant, said to her that if she liked the house he would be glad if she would stay the night.

She said she liked it so much that she would stay there for the remainder of her days. He took this as a polite figure of speech.

A fortnight later, as she still prolonged her visit, the owner suggested that Europe might be expecting her return.

"But I do not intend to return," she replied carelessly.

"Ah! then you mean to build a palace in the neighbourhood," said he.

"No! This house suits me very well."

"But I cannot let it or sell it, Milady."

"I do not wish to hire it, nor to buy it, but I intend to keep it."

In this dilemma the merchant dispatched a messenger post haste to Emir Beshyr, who sent word to Lady Hester that she must give up the house.

Lady Hester, however, wrote to Constantinople, whence a courier came to the Emir, bearing the order: "Obey the Princess of Europe in everything."

And then the disgusted merchant fled, leaving her ladyship in possession!

For twenty years she lived the life of a recluse at Djoun, growing gradually more detached from the material world, and more accustomed to dwell in a mental and spiritual realm of her own creation. She had intended at one time to follow a plan dear to the heart of Christina of Sweden, and surround herself with literary men and artists whom she proposed inviting from Europe.* This scheme had fallen

* "Travels," vol. iii., p. 61.



DR. C. L. MERYON, LADY HESTER'S PHYSICIAN, IN BEDOUIN DRESS.

through, and Lady Hester interested herself instead in those who could discuss with her the supernatural lore and mystic ideas common to Eastern thought. She steeped her active mind in astrology, magic, prophecy and the mysteries of esoteric religion.

Ever since the day in England when the prophet Brothers had declared she was to be Queen of Jerusalem this hope had grown upon her imagination, and she now solemnly awaited the coming of her kingdom. Brothers, Lousteneau—a half-crazed Frenchman who had served in the Mahratta wars as General to Tippoo Sahib, and now formed one of her household at Djoun—and a prophet called Metta influenced Lady Hester considerably. Brothers had told her “she would one day go to Jerusalem and lead back the chosen people; that on her arrival in the Holy Land mighty changes would take place in the world, and that she would pass seven years in the Desert.” When Fazackerley, Gally Knight and North were at Brusa they bantered Lady Hester on this subject, saying: “Well, Madam, you must go to Jerusalem. Hester, Queen of the Jews! Hester, Queen of the Jews!” Metta, after 1815, was in her employ as steward and read to her from a book on prophecy “That a European female would come and live on Mount Lebanon at a certain epoch, would build a house there, and would obtain power and influence greater than a Sultan’s; that a boy, without a father, would join her, whose destiny would be fulfilled under her wing; that the coming of the Messiah would follow, but be preceded by war, pestilence, famine, and other calamities; that the Messiah would ride a horse born saddled, and that a woman would come from a far country to partake in the mission.” The woman was the Baroness de Fériat,* who announced her arrival in 1835; the fatherless boy seemed to Lady Hester to point to the Duc de Reichstadt.†

* See p. 276.

† “Memoirs,” vol. i., pp. 205-6.

As early as 1816 Bankes told Stratford Canning * that the prophecy obsessed her. The forecast was repeated by Lousteneau, the soldier-prophet, whom Dr. Wolff † mentions in his "Travels and Adventures." Lousteneau, he wrote,

"had received the name of 'Lion in War and Tiger in battle.' He had lost one arm, and in 1812, tired of active service, became a hermit upon Mount Carmel. There Lady Hester met him in 1815 and he said to her 'Madame, le moment que je parle avec vous, l'Empereur Napoléon à échappé de l'Ile d'Elbe.' Lady Hester took down the date of this conversation; and, several months afterwards, she received a letter from England, giving her the tidings of the escape of Napoleon, and at that very day and hour when it was predicted to her by Monsieur Lusteneau."

Lady Hester received him at Mar Elias, and ordered her household to call him "the Prophet." He attempted "to convert her Ladyship to Christianity, for she had become a Druse," so she turned him out of the house. Later he carried on with Lady Hester a violent correspondence. She wrote to him one day, as he told Wolff, "I have never been a Christian, nor shall I ever be one." He wrote to her, in answer, "If you become a Christian, God will not gain anything by it, if you don't become a Christian He will not lose anything by it." ‡

Dr. Wolff was willing to affirm on oath that Lousteneau foretold correctly the historic earthquake which happened in August, 1822, at Aleppo. Barker, the Consul-General, said to Wolff of Lady Hester: "She is undoubtedly crazy,

* "Life of Stratford Canning," by Stanley Lane Poole, vol. i., p. 292.

† Joseph Wolff (1795-1862), the missionary, born of Jewish parents, converted to Christianity and baptised September 13th, 1812; married February 6th, 1827, Georgiana Mary, sixth daughter of Horatio Walpole, Earl of Orford. Author of "Journals," etc.

‡ "My religion," said Lady Hester, "is to try to do as well as I can in God's eyes. That is the only merit I have: I try to do the best I can."—"Memoirs," vol. i., p. 143.

An Extraordinary Letter 243

and as a proof of it I will show you this letter." It was dated April, 1821, and was as follows :

"MY DEAR MR. BARKER,—I beseech you not to go to Aleppo or Antioch, for both cities will be utterly destroyed in about a year. I tell you this in the name of the Prophet Lustaneau."

Wolff had a little "tiff" with Lady Hester shortly afterwards.

He said to the Hon. John Caradoc, with whom he was travelling in 1823, "I have a letter with me for Miss Williams, who resides with Lady Hester Stanhope. This I will send to her, and write her a civil line ; but I shall not mention Lady Hester Stanhope's name." The letter was conveyed by an Arab servant. A reply came for Wolff from Lady Hester herself, which ran as follows :

"I am astonished that an apostate should dare to thrust himself into observation in my family. Had you been a learned Jew, you never would have abandoned a religion rich in itself, though defective ; nor would you have embraced the shadow of a one—I mean the Christian religion. Light travels faster than sound, therefore the supreme Being could not have allowed his creatures to live in darkness for nearly two thousand years, until paid speculating wanderers deem it proper to raise their venal voices to enlighten them.

"HESTER LUCY STANHOPE."

To this Dr. Wolff answered :

"To the Right Honourable Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope.

"MADAM,

"I have just received a letter which bears your ladyship's signature, but I doubt its being genuine, as I never had the honour of writing to your ladyship, or of mentioning your name in my letter to Miss Williams. With regard to my views and

244 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

pursuits, they give me perfect rest and happiness, and they must be quite immaterial to your ladyship.

"I have the honour to be

Your most humble and obedient servant,

"JOSEPH WOLFF."

Wolff sent this answer by the same servant as before. On Lady Hester receiving it, she perused it, and desired the man to wait, that she might give him a present. She then came out with a whip, kicked the poor fellow behind, and sent him away. He came back lame to Wolff, and told him that the daughter of the King of England had beaten him. Wolff, in order to satisfy him, gave him a dollar, for which he dared to say the man would have gladly undergone another beating at the same price, from the daughter of the King of England.*

The year 1823 was the year of the now famous "bastinado" letter, which has often been quoted as a proof of Lady Hester's eccentricity and cruelty. Her bark was far worse than her bite, and if she treated the servants harshly, there was probably a great deal to be said on her side of the question. She accused them of neglect, ignorance and heartlessness, but when they were in trouble she never failed to help them. She was a creature of many moods. Of two letters to Lord Strangford one is written in a far milder spirit than the other:

Mount Lebanon: 1823.

"I have always avoided the society of the Consuls upon the coast. Mr. Abbott I consider one of the most impudent, bombastic, lying, underhanded fellows that can be. It is a good thing for him that I am not the Ambassador, for I would flog him within an inch of his life. . . . I consider Mr. Abbott and Yacoub Aga men of such disgraceful character in every point of

* "Travels and Adventures of the Rev. Joseph Wolff, D.D., LL.D.," vol. i., pp. 270-2, 285-6. Second Edition. (London: Saunders Otley, 1860.)

view, that I firmly tell your Lordship that no situation, however disagreeable, I might be placed in in this country by unforeseen circumstances, would oblige me to hold any communication with such men. What I have said of those persons to your Lordship I am ready to say to their faces and a great deal more.

" . . . When I abuse Consuls * I should not forget to make an exception in favour of Mr. Barker, who is a very good sort of John Bull. It is well known, I believe, that I have no particular admiration for those who bear the title, as they in general partake of the perverseness of their native atmosphere, and Mr. Barker possesses in a high degree one of the necessary qualifications of a John Bull, and that is in considering the person of a king is that of a Great Llama, and that it is quite *criminal* to make any difference between upstarts and those who have reigned for centuries. He has suffered much from the earthquakes, but has borne all his losses with cheerful resignation, and has tried to persuade me by a letter of eight pages, that earthquakes are necessary to human happiness, being ordained by Providence to purify the air.

"I told Mr. Abbott, in my first interview with him, that I desired he would not communicate any of his plans to me, and when Yacoub Aga and his wife expressed an intention of seeking protection under my roof, I declared that I would not have the smallest connection with them, and that if they troubled me with any messages, that I would bastinado the bearer, *which I did*.

"My lord, I might bow my head to an axe wielded by the hand of a manly tyrant, whose good qualities, from excess, had in the end become vices; but as for a set of miserable reptiles I shall ever set them at defiance.

"If I have not the right to choose my own religion I have again sinned by not allowing a set of missionaries to use my name in this country in the promulgation of a sort of bastard religion which meets the approbation of no sect

* Lady Hester's hatred of consuls was intense. "D—— the consular authority," she used to say to Miss Williams, "hire some strong peasant to drive him away with a good stick, if he makes his appearance. . . . As long as I have breath in my body, no consul shall ever presume to enter my doors without my leave."—"Memoirs," vol. i., p. 225.

whatever. The imputation of vanity can only be attached to worldly concerns, therefore I trust your lordship will not accuse me of the foible if I simply repeat the opinion given by the wisest men of the East, and some of them the most profound metaphysicians I have ever met with, 'that if I was capable of reading and calculating in Oriental languages, that I should excel all of them in knowledge of sublime subjects.' It is quite ludicrous that a set of pettifogging missionaries should come here to open the eyes of a people whose shoes they are not worthy to tie, and before whom even some of the best French philosophers would appear like a lot of quack doctors. . . . I am not a person likely to leave any money behind me, and whatever personal property I may possess in this country, I have already bequeathed to Miss Williams, and whatever provision my store may contain at the time of my death may serve to feed the orphans in my house, and the blind and lame whom I protect. . . . As my death has been foretold both at Beirut and Sayda, in an indirect way, and the vengeance that would be hurled upon Michael and upon my servants, I think it right to think of the poor creatures I may leave behind me; as long as I have breath they have nothing to fear." *

The second letter was written from Mount Lebanon on November 12th, 1823.

Lady Hester had received a letter from Mr. Javell that settled the business which was the subject of Lord Strangford's letter, and by the same conveyance she sent Mr. Javell bills of exchange to repay him.

She trusted that Lord Strangford would forgive apparent neglect on her part, but the delay in answering his letter, or rather in *forwarding* it, arose from several untoward circumstances. Even at this moment she was rather puzzled how to act, as it was believed everywhere that he had left, or was about to leave, Constantinople. She mentioned this that he might take proper means to contradict

* "Lives of the Lords Strangford," by G. B. de Fonblanque, pp. 141-4. (Cassell, 1877.)

this report, if totally unfounded, which she hoped was the case.

She was now pretty well, and about to return to her house on the following day. She was afraid that Lord Strangford might think she had been very severe upon Mr. Abbott, but she assured him she had not been more so than others who spoke of him, and who were much disgusted with his conduct. He had placed a man charged with having killed his own children, having pilfered and robbed, having made one poor wife miserable and taken a second during the life of the first, recommended and sold to him by Mr. Abbott (at least so Yacoub Aga had said), and the girl having been publicly seen to be brought to Mr. Abbott's house to be married under a guard of Turkish soldiers. Surely this, she concluded indignantly, was not the character to represent the English nation at Sayda, and must certainly have been appointed to such a situation without Lord Strangford's knowledge.

An account of the bastinado affair occurs in R. R. Madden's "Travels in Turkey, Egypt, Nubia and Palestine." It has rarely, if ever, been quoted in this connection.

Of Lady Hester, Madden wrote in August, 1827:

"Her great enemy is a certain Yacoub Aga, the converted Bishop, a man of infamous character, and who has contrived, with the wages of his infamy, to purchase a village, which is about an hour's journey from Djoun. Some time ago this man seized on her Ladyship's camels, on pretence of employing them for some work of the Emir's. The servants resisted, and one of them was bastinadoed: the servants of Lady Hester retaliated, some time after, on some people of the Emir's, and bastinadoed them: this produced a great deal of ill-will between the Emir and her Ladyship; and Yacoub Aga took every opportunity of insulting the people of the latter, wherever he met them.

"Not many days before my arrival, one of the servants from Djoun, on passing the house of Yacoub Aga, was assailed by the women of the latter; they abused his mistress and he retorted

248 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

their invectives on them and their master. The poor fellow got cudgelled; and in return Yacoub's men were subsequently cudgelled by the servants of Lady Hester. Yacoub complained to the Emir; the Emir complained to the Pacha; and, finally, the firman was issued, which left her Ladyship without servants, and has converted her gardens into a desert.

"The present rumours of war make her situation still more perilous, but her intrepidity is unshaken, and all my endeavours to prevail on her to remove, at least, into Egypt, have been fruitless. The only European at Djoun is Miss Williams, whom I have not seen, for the laws of the harem are observed there as strictly as in the Turkish capital.

"I had an opportunity of seeing that the Bedouins remain as attached as ever to their benefactress (for such Lady Hester is); they come to her in all their difficulties for counsel, and show her more respect than I ever saw paid to the Viceroy of Egypt.

"The account of her troubles with the Emir and the Pacha, I have had from her Ladyship's own lips; very different causes have been assigned for them, but those I have stated are the true ones." *

Madden's account of Lady Hester is important because his visit occurred before 1827, a time when little was known about her. It is the first of many similar stories, and gives on the whole a correct and unprejudiced view of her. Madden was a doctor and writer, a friend of Lady Blessington's, and twenty years younger than Lady Hester. He reached her at a time when she was practically alone, but for Miss Williams. Meryon had paid his second visit and had left again. Lady Hester was more shut up than before.

"The people of Sidon laughed at me," wrote Madden, "when I talked of visiting Lady Hester Stanhope: the greatest lords, they said, had been refused admittance; and latterly, every stranger had in vain solicited an interview. I wrote a note to her Ladyship, requesting the favour of an audience, and stating

* "Travels in Turkey, Egypt, Nubia and Palestine, in 1824-7," by R. R. Madden, vol. ii., pp. 251-3. (Colburn, 1829.)

my profession and pursuits. In the evening, to the surprise of all Sidon, a pair of horses arrived for me, and a polite note from her Ladyship, stating she would be happy to see me, but without a single servant. Her Ladyship is now living about eight miles from Sidon, in the interior of the mountains, at a villa of her own construction, called Djoun; there is no village in its vicinity; hemmed in on all sides by arid mountains, this residence is shut out from the world, and is at the mercy of the Bedouins, if they had the audacity to attack it. But of this there is little fear, they regard her as a Queen of the Desert, though I never heard her receive any other title from them than *Sittee Inglis*, or the English lady." *

Madden was taken for "her Ladyship's English agent coming out with a vessel of specie for her use." His assertions that he had not a single *para* with him were disbelieved. At last he reached Lady Hester's abode on the mountain top.

"After the gates were thrown open," he continued, "I was surprised to observe a thousand little elegancies in the distribution of the walks and the adjustment of the flower pots in the court through which I passed. Everything without was wild and barbarous, and all within confessed the hand of taste. I was led from the court into a little garden, at the extremity of which there was a sort of kiosk, consisting of two rooms, a sitting room and bedroom, furnished in the European style, with chairs and tables. Everything seemed to have been prepared for my arrival, and in a short time an excellent dinner was served up, and various sorts of the choicest wines of Lebanon were laid on the table. It seemed to me as if I was in some enchanted palace, the servants came and went, but never opened their lips; I spoke to them but they answered me with bows and nods."

At last a servant brought a note from Lady Hester saying she would receive her visitor at sunset, and when this hour arrived Madden arrayed himself in his finest Mameluke apparel and followed the servant.

* "Travels in Turkey, Egypt, Nubia and Palestine," by R. R. Madden, vol. ii. pp. 241-2. (Colburn, 1839.)

"The room into which I was ushered was in the Arab style, a long divan was raised at the end, about a foot and a half from the ground; and, at the further corner, as well as a glimmering lamp would allow me to distinguish, I perceived a tall figure in the male attire of the country, which was no other than Lady Hester herself. She received me in the most gracious manner, arose at my entrance, and said my visit afforded her great pleasure. In the course of one hour we were on the best of terms, we conversed like people who had been acquainted for years; and, indeed, her Ladyship was so well acquainted with my character within the first two hours of my interview, whether by physiognomy or the stars, that she acquainted me with every peculiar lineament of my mind, with as much facility and as much correctness as if she had been tracing those of my countenance. I was certainly astonished at her penetration; but I have no doubt that in judging of the characters of strangers her Ladyship consults the stars less than the features of the person whose intellect she wishes to ascertain. For seven hours that I had the honour of sitting with her Ladyship there never was a pause in the conversation. Every subject connected with oriental learning was discussed, and every observation of her Ladyship's evinced a degree of genius that astonished me, and was couched in such forcible and energetic language as to impress me with the idea that I was conversing with a woman of no ordinary intellect. The peculiarity of some of her opinions in no wise detracted from the general profundity of her reflections: and, though I could not assent to many of her abstract notions regarding astral influence and astrological science, I had still no reason to alter my opinions of her exalted talents, though it might appear they were unfortunately directed to very speculative studies. . . . I am quite sure that, whatever may be the eccentricity of Lady Hester Stanhope, her mind is unimpaired, and that few women can boast of more real genius and none of more active benevolence."

Madden thought that Lady Hester's motive for living in the desert was the ambition of governing, the pleasure of reigning in the affections of the kind-hearted Bedouins,

and in exercising the power which one strong mind possesses over a thousand weak ones. This state of things she had achieved by making considerable presents year after year, but no private fortune could withstand the drain.

"So long as the presents were made, the Pachas were all courtesy, and the name of the *Sittee Inglis* was a passport over Syria; but, latterly, that her hand had ceased to lavish the shawls of Cashmere, the silver-mounted pistols of England, the swords of Damascus, the muslins of India on these rapacious governors, their friendship had waxed cold; and in some instances, has been converted into enmity: such is the case with Abdallah, Pacha of Acre, and the Emir Beshyr of the Druses. The latter has taken every occasion of thwarting her, and has latterly issued a firman, which he procured from Acre, forbidding any Mahometan subject, on pain of death, to remain in her service, or to carry water to her house, with which it is supplied from a river three or four miles distant. The consequence of this edict is, that she has been left without servants, and her beautiful garden has gone to ruin for want of irrigation.

"Her establishment formerly consisted of thirty or forty domestics, and a great number of girls whose education was her employment: but they have all deserted her, with the exception of five servants, and on their fidelity her life is now dependent. Several attempts have been lately made to break in at night: people have been found murdered, who were attached to her, and the corpse of a stranger, a few days ago, was found lying near the gate. . . .

"Having smoked and conversed till half-past three in the morning, I retired, delighted with a conversation in which the natural eloquence of this lady was only surpassed by the originality of her observations. Her habits are peculiar; she retires to rest at the dawn and rises in the afternoon; she takes her meals in her own apartments and never with her guests; she drinks no wine, and very seldom eats meat. Other nights it was still later when I retired; tea was sometimes brought in towards two in the morning.

"The male attire of Syria is extremely rich and flowing; it

becomes females no less than men, and sets off the portly figure of Lady Hester to great advantage. As the situation of her Ladyship is more that of a Bedouin sovereign than of one in a private station, I do not conceive the laws of hospitality are infringed by giving these particulars."

For many pages Madden discussed Lady Hester's views and her reminiscences of the people she had known. She professed to read no books, for books, she asserted, "file away the mind." She showed him "two of the greatest wonders"—a horse "saddled by the hand of God" and a twelvefold ear of wheat, both of which had been destined to fall into the hands of a woman, a stranger in the East. Madden declared he had never seen a finer animal than the horse with the celestial saddle. He listened with reverence to her extraordinary ideas on this and other subjects.

The two Arabian mares of a particular breed, which she kept in expectation of the second coming of the Messiah, had never been mounted. They were called Lāila and Lulu, the former being "born saddled"—that is to say, hollow-backed and with a double backbone. Lāila was a chestnut thoroughbred, Lulu a grey. Lady Hester kept grooms for both the mares, who had no other duties than to exercise the sacred animals twice a day. During this solemn function no one was allowed to walk near the ground or watch what was going on, at the risk of instant dismissal. Every morning in summer the mares' tails, legs and manes were washed in soap and water, and they were tethered out of doors in a beautiful corner of the grounds, near the flower-garden. In winter they were stalled, their delicate limbs being covered with warm felt cloths.*

* See "Memoirs," vol. i., pp. 202-3. "Even to the last, when Dr. Meryon was about to leave her for ever and she was near death, she still contemplated with equanimity the approaching advent of the Mehedah (or Messiah), and still looked on her mare Lāila as destined to bear Him, with herself on Lulu by His side."—"Memoirs," vol. iii., pp. 330-1.

To Madden she said at the conclusion of his visit :

"I never will return to England. I am encompassed by perils, I am no stranger to them ; I have suffered shipwreck off the coast of Cyprus ; I have had the plague here ; have fallen from my horse near Acre, and been trampled on by him ; I have encountered the robbers of the Desert and when my servants quaked I have galloped in amongst them and forced them to be courteous ; I have faced them ;—and when a horde of plunderers was breaking in at my gate I sallied out amongst them, sword in hand, and after convincing them, had they ever been inclined, that they could not hurt me, I fed them at my gate and they behaved like thankful beggars. Here am I destined to remain ; that which is written in the great book who may alter ? It is true I am surrounded by perils ; it is true I am at war with the Prince of the Mountains and the Pacha of Acre ; it is very true my enemies are capable of assassination ; but if I do perish, my fall shall be a bloody one. I have plenty of arms, good Damascus blades, I use no guns, and while I have an arm to wield a *hanger*, these barren rocks shall have a banquet of slaughter before ' my face looks black ' in the presence of my enemies, and two hundred years hence the Bedouins of the Desert shall talk of the *Sittee Inglis*, how she sat her Arab steed, and fell like an Arab chief, when the star of her glory had set for ever."

Until ill-health compelled her to give up riding, Lady Hester's courage on horseback never failed her. Maria Theresa Asmar, in her "*Memoirs of a Babylonian Princess*,"* thus describes Lady Hester leaving a friend's house : "A spirited charger stood at the gate champing the bit with fiery impatience. She put her foot in the stirrup and, vaulting nimbly into the saddle, which she, after the Oriental fashion, bestrode like a man, started off at a rapid pace, galloping over rock and mountain, in advance of her suite, with a fearlessness and address which would have done honour to a Mameluke."

* Vol. ii., p. 187. 1844.

254 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

It was impossible for Madden to give an idea of the animation with which she spoke to him.

"To understand her energy," he declared, "one must have heard her and one must have been accustomed to have heard people speaking of the influence of the stars (for it is the common topic of oriental conversation) to listen with gravity and even with interest to such observations as fell from her Ladyship."

After staying with her some days, Madden said farewell to Lady Hester,

"highly gratified with the society of a person whose originality, or eccentricity (if it deserves that name) is a far less prominent feature in her character than her extensive information, her intrepidity of spirit, her courteous manners, and her unbounded benevolence." *

Only a short time after Madden's visit to Lady Hester, another Eastern traveller, John Carne, arrived in the hope of seeing her, but she refused to allow him to call. His interest in her, however, was not in the least diminished by this rebuff, and many pages of his "Letters from the East" are devoted to her personality, her residence, and her surroundings. Carne saw the Emir Beshyr, and apparently gained some of his information from that quarter. "Of Lady Hester Stanhope he (the Emir) has the most unqualified admiration," he wrote.

"She formerly came sometimes to visit him, and, springing from her Arab horse, walked without ceremony into the palace, with her riding-whip in her hand, and in her Mameluke dress. The old man received the Queen of the East, as she has been named, with delight. 'Come, my child,' he said, 'to visit me whenever it is your pleasure; use no ceremony with me,

* "Travels in Turkey, Egypt, Nubia and Palestine," by R. R. Madden. See letter xxxv., pp. 230-69. (Colburn, 1829.)

for my palace is your home, and your presence is to me as the light of the sun.' The regard and respect paid to this lady by the chiefs of the East, both old and young, the powerful as well as the weak, are invariable. The Cadi at Beirout spoke of her with a veneration next to what he would have used when naming the Prophet or the Sultan. The young Pacha of Acre, desperate and lawless, filling the country around with bloodshed and exactions of every kind, pays instant deference to a billet of hers. It is not boundless wealth that creates their admiration; for her income, till a handsome legacy was left her about three years ago, did not exceed £1,500 a year.* It is not the fascination of beauty that operates so powerfully on the natives of the East; for her person is plain and masculine, and her character pure and unspotted. Inquire of a Turk respecting her conduct, and he will lift up his hand and declare her uniformly to be the most noble, virtuous, and excellent of women. Already in the vale of life, and in a state of single blessedness, she cannot contemplate with temper the joys of domestic union; and like our maiden queen of excellent memory, she has the most sovereign dislike to see any of her followers, or attendants yoked together in matrimony."

The author went on to tell a story about Miss Elizabeth Williams, but he does not name his informant.

"A young man of Beirout, with whom we were acquainted, of the name of Massad, served her ladyship in the quality of dragoman," he explained. "He was very clever, had been in England, and spoke its language well; he was employed to do all the commissions for Marilius [? Mar Elias] in the neighbouring towns, and, knowing the rogueries of his countrymen, was very useful to the establishment. He was very good-looking, and well-informed; and having handsome wages, without a great deal to do, found his place much to his satisfaction. The only European in the establishment was a Miss W., a companion and dependent of her ladyship's. All the English servants had been shipped off, bag and baggage, with little warning, a good

* Carne probably referred to an annuity left to Lady Hester on the death of her brother James. See p. 305.

while before; as their mistress found their English tastes and habits so ill accorded with her Arab ones, and gave her so much annoyance, that she sent them all home, determining never to have an English servant again. It so happened, and it was perfectly natural, that young Massad and the young lady formed an attachment for each other. In her isolated situation there was no other object possessed of the least attraction, save the Arab sheik or the Turkish gentleman, who sometimes came to Marilius to pay their homage to its mistress; but they spoke a strange language, and their manners were too oriental for English feelings. Confiding too much in their mistress's indulgence, Massad and the young lady were imprudent enough to request her approbation of their attachment, and her consent to their being united and still retaining their situations under her roof. This announcement kindled at once her indignation; the too sanguine dragoman was bereaved of his sabre, which he had received as a present, and instantly dismissed from his office and the house, with, however, a handsome present; and the unfortunate Miss W. felt her residence afterwards less enviable than it had formerly been.

"Pale and dispirited, removed from all society congenial to her wishes and feelings, her situation was not to be envied; but, ere twelve months had elapsed, the scene at Marilius looked more cheerful; old grievances were forgotten; the dragoman was recalled to his situation, and 'the clouds of displeasure no longer sat heavy on the brow.'"

* "Letters from the East," by John Carne, vol. ii., p. 123 *et seq.* (Colburn, 1830.



DR. R. R. MADDEN (1798-1886)
Attending a lady of the Harem.

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CHAPTER XXVIII

MERYON'S RETURN

HIS five years' engagement with Sir Gilbert Heathcote having terminated, Dr. Meryon decided to go East once more. He had married in the interval, and on January 23rd, 1827, he left England, accompanied by his wife. In June they reached Pisa, where the Doctor received several letters from Lady Hester, containing complaints about the condition of her health and her eyesight, of her financial position, and the loss of her brother James. "Grief and sickness," she said, "have reduced me to a wretched scarecrow." James Stanhope had been dead two years, and she never afterwards set foot beyond her own front door.*

Anxious as he was to help and cheer her in her loneliness, Dr. Meryon was unable to reach Djoun until 1830.

After setting sail at Leghorn in September, 1827, the vessel was plundered by Greek pirates, and the travellers returned to Leghorn.

Mrs. Meryon was afraid of another disaster at sea, and was unwilling that her husband should travel without her. Thus Meryon was in a quandary. He was much concerned when he heard from Lady Hester that she had lost her companion, Miss Williams, who had died from an attack of malignant fever in 1828, and that she was left alone with native servants.

* See "Memoirs," vol. i., p. 96.

For more than a year he did his best to overcome his wife's repugnance to the voyage, and finally, in November, 1830, she gave in. A fresh start was made, and the Meryons reached Djoun the following month.

Lady Hester, who was in good health, frankly welcomed the Doctor. She kissed him on both cheeks, and showed him other marks of regard which astonished him; the more because in earlier years she had never even taken his arm, an honour she kept only for members of the aristocracy. She was, however, not at all enthusiastic with regard to the arrival of his wife, whom she did not wish to see. Her establishment now consisted of a secretary, Chasseaud, Perini, her *maître d'hôtel*, seven black slaves, a girl Fatôum who waited on her, a groom, two stablemen, a porter, a cook, a scullion, three or four mukers, and a number of workmen about the estate, in all some thirty-five or forty souls.

Her temper had not improved since Meryon's last visit, and she boasted that when her servants were refractory, "nobody could give such a slap in the face, when required, as she could." As an instance of the tricks they played upon her, she told Meryon that her cut-glass goblets had disappeared one by one. The servants broke one, and Miss Williams gave out another. They kept the broken pieces, and every week or two brought one bit and then another, saying they had had an accident. Each time they were given a new goblet until all were gone. "The jades destroy everything," she cried, "but it is not that which gives me pain; it is to think that I have not one person who will see me well waited on."

The "Memoirs" abound with curious details about her habits and manners. She was invariably dressed in the costume of a Turkish gentleman, wearing a large white turban over a red fez, and a striped yellow and red silk

handkerchief tied under the chin or falling loosely on both cheeks. Her long white cloak or abah disclosed a crimson robe. When it was cold she wore a pelisse underneath it, as well as a flowered gown. Scarlet pantaloons, yellow leather stockings and yellow slippers completed the attire. In these clothes her appearance was distinguished, but oddly in contrast with her old self when dressed in the fashionable and costly gowns she had worn in society in England.

She slept on a mattress laid on planks nailed upon trestles. She had no sheets, but covered herself with Barbary blankets.

Her bed was rarely made as she liked it. Whilst the servants altered it according to her instructions, she smoked and chewed sugar and cloves. All night long she required to be waited upon, taking spiced drinks, toast, strawberry preserve, or some other dainty morsel as her appetite prompted.

Although she loved horses above other animals, her house was the refuge of numberless cats, three or four huge mastiffs, and other pet animals.

"I have counted as many as thirty old cats and kittens," wrote Meryon, "without including those that haunted the store-rooms, the granaries, the outhouses, and the gardens.*"

She measured time by the sun and the stars, having neither clocks nor watches, and saying she preferred this method because she could not "bear anything unnatural."

When she rose "a thousand preparations" were necessary for her comfort, and she spent her days organising her household with a keen eye to details.

"The most trivial and fugitive affairs were transacted with quite as much pains and exactitude as she brought to bear upon the most important plans," wrote Meryon. "This was, in fact,

* "Memoirs," vol. iii., p. 146.

260 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

the character of her mind, exhibiting itself throughout her entire conduct. I have known her lose nearly a whole day in scolding about a nosegay of roses which she wished to send to the Pacha's wife. For the purpose of sending nosegays safely to distant places, she had invented a sort of canister. In the bottom part was placed a tumbler full of water, in which the flower-stalks were kept moist; and the nosegay was thus carried to any distance, suspended to the mule's saddle, or in a man's hand. The servants, who could not understand why such importance was attached to a few flowers, were remiss in keeping the canisters clean, nor would the gardener arrange the flowers as Lady Hester wished. For a matter like this she would storm and cry, and appeal to me if it was not a shame she should be so treated." *

Another of her whims was to keep her own cooking utensils separate from those used for visitors. She had her separate kitchen. "Neither shall water be boiled there, nor cooking go on there, nor saucepan, dish, nor glass that has once gone out for anyone ever return there again," she cried in disgust.†

Her chief recreation was talking, and she spoke for hours at a time, topic after topic flying through her active brain, "as wind comes in at the window."‡ All her visitors emphasised this point. Several of them suffered from her volubility, growing weak and faint§ during the interminable period they were forced by politeness to stand listening to her conversation. They agreed, however, as to the entertainment they derived from her inexhaustible fund of anecdotes, her inimitable powers of mimicry, her shrewd

* "Memoirs," vol. ii., pp. 162-3. † *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 149.

‡ This habit "fostered the dreams of greatness which floated in her brain, and . . . she fancied herself, for a moment, the Queen of the East."—"Memoirs," vol. iii., p. 124.

§ Dr. Newbery was one of those who lost consciousness on one such occasion. Lady Hester attributed the fact to her remarks on the disgrace to which English ministers had reduced their country!—"Memoirs," vol. i., p. 138.

judgment of people and things, and her quaint conception of spiritual worlds.

To Dr. Meryon she talked of her debts, her illnesses, her trials and her sufferings, but she usually turned from these depressing themes to picture a bright future when "her magnificent star should rise again with renewed splendour, to gladden the world." She lectured "like a parson in his pulpit," and anecdote followed anecdote so fast that the Doctor could not recollect half of them. She kept him from his wife and family as long as possible, for she refused to be friendly with Mrs. Meryon, and only saw her once during the Doctor's stay at Djoun, and then only as a favour to him. Her dislike of her own sex had increased rather than the reverse since she had stated her views on the subject to Hobhouse at Malta in 1810.

Mrs. Meryon's visit lasted three hours, and she was received kindly enough. Lady Hester gave her a handsome Turkish robe and turban, but, ignorant of Eastern customs, she left the gifts behind her on her departure. This breach of good manners was excused, but two or three weeks later she refused to fall in with a plan made by Lady Hester for the Doctor to visit Damascus, and attend to a friend of the Pacha's, saying that if he went "it never could be without rendering her miserable," for she could not bear the thought of being left alone among strangers. Lady Hester could not forgive this display of feminine weakness, and from that hour "began a system of hostility which never ceased." * She declared that Mrs. Meryon's opposition to her will, if not effectually put down, would be subversive of all her authority, and make it be supposed she was not the great personage she was held to be. When Meryon offered to take his wife back to Europe, she threatened that she would make it difficult for them to find means of

* "Memoirs," vol. i., p. 166.

travelling, which the Doctor knew to be no idle warning, as the peasants dared not let out their beasts of burden to anyone who had displeased her Ladyship.

This state of things becoming intolerable, and the Meryons finding themselves neglected by the neighbours, who did not dare to befriend people under the ban of the ruling lady's animosity, Meryon decided to leave Syria at the first opportunity, and, on the arrival a few months later of a remittance from England, he shook the dust of Djoun from his feet and turned his back on Lady Hester for the space of six years. Their parting was a strange one. She sent the Doctor out of the room on some idle errand, and when he returned to bid her farewell, he found her door bolted and was refused admittance.

CHAPTER XXIX

LAMARTINE AND KINGLAKE

MERYON left Lady Hester at the beginning of April, 1831. In the following year Ibrahim Pacha invaded Syria and captured Acre. Lady Hester gave shelter to many who fled from the besieged city. "My house was like the Tower of Babel," she wrote. When commanded by Ibrahim Pacha she refused to surrender the refugees, saying that so long as there was breath in her body or a piastre in her coffers they should remain under her roof. She impoverished herself to relieve the needs of starving wretches, and did everything she could to keep them from slavery and worse. Seventy-five people were living on her bounty when she received a visit from the poet Lamartine. She kept him in ignorance about her less exalted guests, fearing that his sentiment lay "in his pen and not in his heart."

He had approached her with a genuine desire to see her. "Her turn for solitude and meditation was in such close analogy with my own inclinations," he wrote, "that I felt anxious to discover in which particulars our characters approximated." In his letter to her he said, "I should number as one of the most interesting days of my pilgrimage that on which I might be allowed to behold a lady who is, in her own person, one of the wonders of those regions I am ambitious to visit."

Lady Hester's answer was favourable. Lamartine left

Sidon at seven in the morning, and, accompanied by his friend, de Parseval, climbed the "bare and rugged hills of chalk" until he came within sight of her residence. "We arrived at noon," wrote the poet; "the house is not what we call one in Europe. . . . It is a confused and grotesque assemblage of ten or a dozen small cottages . . . separated from one another by small courts or gardens." He had no idea that several of them harboured refugees.

His first experiences of Djoun were similar to those recorded by Madden—a meal in solitude, a long wait, and a summons during the afternoon to the apartments of his hostess. The reception was also much the same. Lady Hester was seated, clad in her Turkish robes, in a half-darkened chamber.

"You have come a long way to see a hermit," she began. "You are welcome. I receive but few strangers, scarcely more than one or two a year; but your letter pleased me, and I desired to know a person who, like me, loves God, nature and solitude. Besides, something told me that our stars were friendly, and that we should suit each other. I see that my presentiment has not deceived me; your features, which I now see, and the very noise of your footsteps, as you came along the passage, teach me enough respecting you to prevent my repenting the wish to receive you. Sit down, and let us talk, we are already friends."

To this the poet replied in surprise, "What, my Lady? Can you call by the name of friend a man whose life is entirely unknown to you? You do not know who I am."

"According to the world," she replied solemnly, "it is true I do not know who you are, but I know what you are before God. Do not take me for a madwoman, as the world often calls me. I cannot resist the feeling that I wish to open my heart to you. There is a science at present lost to Europe—a science which, cradled in the East, has

never perished here. I understand it—I read the stars. We are all children of some one of those celestial fires which presided at our birth, and of which the happy or malignant influence is written in our eyes, on our foreheads, in our fortunes, in the lines of our hands, in the form of our feet, in our gesture, in our walk. I have seen you only for a few moments, yet you are known to me as well as if I had lived an age with you. Shall I reveal you to yourself? Shall I predict your destiny?”

Lamartine begged her to beware of prophecy, and when she asked him whether he believed in the second coming of the Messiah, he answered her questions without committing himself to any definite statements.

“Believe as you think proper,” she said smiling, as he detailed to her a childlike profession of faith, and then she proceeded to tell him his destiny in spite of his objections. She saw three, four, or even five stars which influenced him.

“You must be a poet,” she cried. “I read it in your eyes and in the upper part of your countenance; lower down you are under the empire of wholly different and almost opposite stars; the powers of energy and activity are apparent. The sun also,” she added, “has its influence over you. I see it by the position of your head, and the manner in which it is thrown back over your left shoulder. Return thanks to God! There are few men born under more than one star; few whose star is favourable, fewer still whose favourable star is not counterbalanced by a malign influence. Yours combine to serve you, to aid you favourably. What is your name?”

The poet had written to her, and she must have been aware of his name, but he declared that when he told her, she replied with an accent of truth, “I never heard it before.”

He was surprised. His name, he said, had been repeated

a million times by all the literary echoes of Europe—but it had never reached her mountain home. He felt all the more flattered that she should have consented to receive one who was unknown to her.

"Poet," she remarked (according to his account), "I love you and hope in you. We shall meet again. You will return to Europe but before long you will visit the East once more. It is your own country."

"The country of my imagination," he corrected.

"Nay, your true country," continued Lady Hester, "the country of your forefathers. Look at your foot. Your instep is very high. There is space between the heel and the toes, sufficient, when you place your foot on the ground, to allow water to flow through without wetting you. It is an Arabian foot—the foot of the East." *

With this remark the interview was temporarily broken off. Lady Hester had a very different impression of the latter part of the conversation. She thought Lamartine insufferably consequential.

"He pointed his toes in my face," she said, so that she felt obliged to remark upon his elegant foot, "and then turned to his dog and kissed him. . . . He thought to make a great effect when he was here, but he was grievously mistaken." †

In the evening the interview was resumed. "This modern magician—this Circe of the Desert fully reminded me," wrote Lamartine, "of the most celebrated Magis of antiquity."

For hours they conversed on all topics under the sun, but chiefly in the language of the mystics. The poet

* See Lamartine's "*Souvenirs, etc., pendant un Voyage en Orient, 1832-3*," tom. i., pp. 242-262. (Paris, 1835.)

† See "*Memoirs*," vol. i., p. 301.

regarded her Ladyship as eminently sane, but perhaps affecting a madness which brought her closely into touch with Oriental thought.

Finally she took him into the garden and showed him the remarkable mares, as she had already shown them to Madden, and as she was presently to show them to Prince Pückler-Muskau. Then they returned indoors and the rest of the evening was spent in conversation.

"The night thus passed away in a free and unaffected range on the part of Lady Hester over every subject incidentally introduced, and again dropped in this desultory talk," he wrote. "I felt that no string was wanting to this lofty and vigorous mind; that all the stops of the instrument gave a correct full and powerful sound, excepting, perhaps, the metaphysical chord, which too great a stretch, too solitary a life, had forced or raised to a tone far too elevated for human understanding. We took leave, on my part with the most lively regret." *

"Lady Hester," wrote the poet, adding his impressions of her personal appearance, "possesses those personal traits which years cannot alter; freshness, colour and grace depart with youth; but when beauty resides in the form itself, in purity of expression, in dignity, in majesty, and a thoughtful countenance, whether a man or woman this beauty may change with the different periods of life, but it does not pass away—it eminently characterises the person of Lady Hester Stanhope." †

Three years after Lamartine's visit Lady Hester received Kinglake whose mother she had known in her girlhood. To him also she wrote cordially when he made an application to be allowed to visit her.

* See Lamartine's "Souvenirs, etc., pendant un Voyage en Orient, 1832-3," tom. i., pp. 262-274. (Paris, 1835.)

† *Ibid.*, p. 253.

268 **Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope**

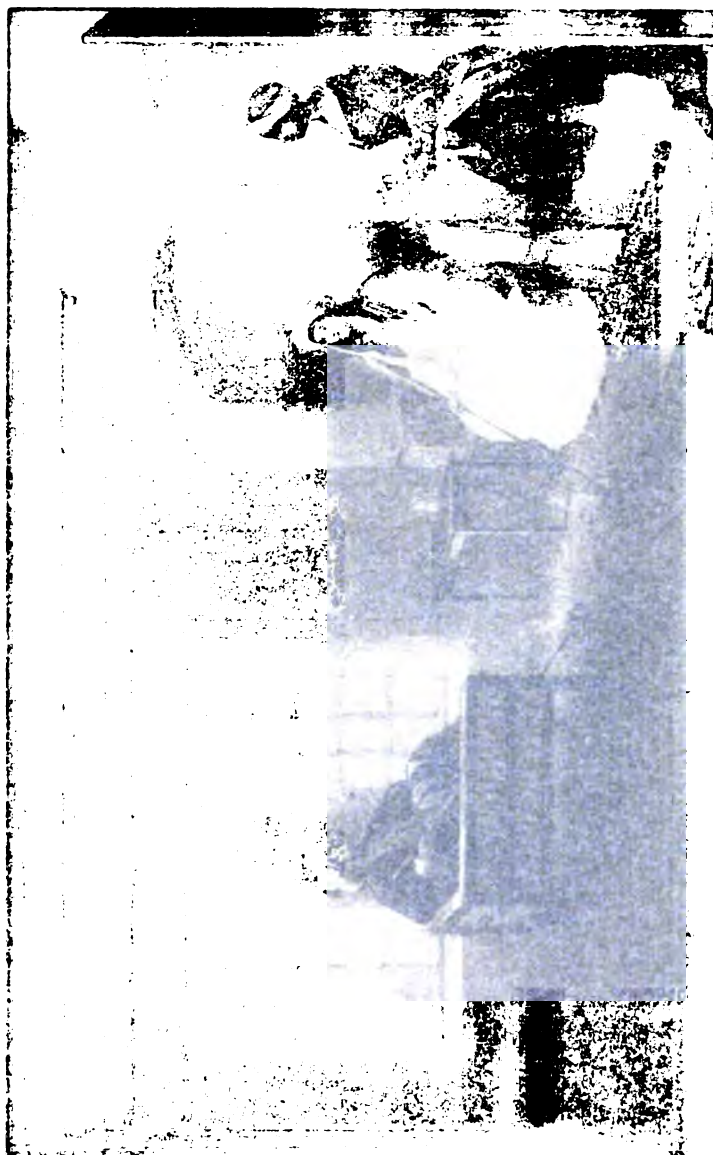
"I hope I shall be disappointed in seeing you on Wednesday, for the late rains have rendered the river Damoor if not dangerous, at least very unpleasant to pass for a person who has been lately indisposed, for if the animal swims, you would be immersed in the waters. The weather will probably change after the 21st of the moon, and after a couple of days the roads and the river will be passable, therefore I shall expect you either Saturday or Monday.

"It will be a great satisfaction to me to have an opportunity of inquiring after your mother, who was a sweet, lovely girl when I knew her."

After the usual formalities prepared for every one of Lady Hester's visitors, Kinglake was ushered into her presence, not without a comical mistake by the way, for he thought "an oriental figure in male costume," who turned out to be the Doctor, was "Miladi" herself. He gave a weird touch to his description of her personal appearance :

"The woman before me," he wrote, "had exactly the person of a prophetess—not, indeed, of the divine Sibyl imagined by Domenichino, so sweetly distracted betwixt love and mystery, but of a good, business-like, practical prophetess, long used to the exercise of her sacred calling. I have been told by those who knew Lady Hester Stanhope in her youth, that any notion of a resemblance betwixt her and the great Chatham must have been fanciful;* but at the time of my seeing her, the large commanding features of the gaunt woman, then sixty years old or more, certainly reminded me of the statesman that lay dying in the House of Lords, according to Copley's picture. Her face was of the most astonishing whiteness, she wore a very large turban, made seemingly of pale cashmere shawls, and so disposed as to conceal the hair; her dress from the chin down to the point at which it was concealed by the drapery on her lap, was a mass of white linen loosely folding—an ecclesiastical sort of affair—more like a surplice than any of those blessed creations

* "Old Coutts put his hands on each side of my face, and kissed me on the forehead," said Lady Hester, "with an exclamation of 'Good God! how like my old friend your grandfather!'"—"Memoirs," vol. i., p. 174.



RECEPTION ROOM AT 1111

1870-1871

1

1872-1873

2

which our souls love under the names of dress, and 'frock,' and 'bodice,' and 'collar' and 'habit-shirt' and sweet 'chemisette' . . .

"A couple of black slave-girls * came at a signal and supplied their mistress, as well as myself, with lighted *tchibouques* and coffee.

"The custom of the East sanctions, and almost commands, some moments of silence whilst you are inhaling the first few breaths of the fragrant pipe; the pause was broken, I think, by my lady, who addressed to me some enquiries respecting my mother, and particularly as to her marriage; but before I had communicated any great amount of family facts, the spirit of the prophetess kindled within her, and presently (though with all the skill of a woman of the world) she shuffled away the subject of poor, dear Somersetshire, and bounded onward into loftier spheres of thought."

Kinglake was now almost swept away by a torrent of occult science.

"For hours and hours this wondrous white woman poured forth her speech, for the most part concerning sacred and profane mysteries; but every now and then she would stay her lofty flight and swoop down upon the world again; whenever this happened, I was interested in her conversation."

After relating various anecdotes about her life among the Arabs, she began to prophesy, saying that the world was on the eve of a stupendous convulsion, and advising Kinglake to "dispose of his property in fragile England, and gain a station in Asia." She told him that he was going into Egypt, and would return to Syria.

"I secretly smiled at this last prophecy as a 'bad shot,'" he wrote, "for I had fully determined, after visiting the pyramids,

* Lady Hester maintained to the last that the black slaves must be treated with severity. "No, doctor," she said, "they do not like mild people! They always say they want no old hens, but a *jigger* (I believe her ladyship meant some ferocious animal) for their master."—"Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 133.

270 **Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope**

to take ship from Alexandria for Greece. But men struggle vainly in the meshes of their Destiny; the unbeliever Cassandra was right after all; the Plague came and the necessity of avoiding the Quarantine to which I should have been subject, if I had sailed from Alexandria, forced me to alter my route; I went down into Egypt, and stayed there for a time, and then crossed the Desert once more, and came back to the mountains of Lebanon, exactly as the Prophetess had foretold."

After announcing the second coming of the Messiah and claiming her power of reading men's characters she descended "to more worldly chat," showed her fund of audacious humour, and began to mimic well-known people, especially Byron and Lamartine. Soon after midnight she dismissed her guest, standing up to bid him farewell almost in the attitude of a soldier at "attention," and letting the drapery which she had held over her lap fall to the ground.

For some reason or other Kinglake was not shown the stables or the gardens. He left with a strong conviction that Lady Hester was absolutely sane, attributing her belief in astrology and magic science to her frequent intercourse with "crazy old dervishes, who received her alms and fostered her extravagances." *

"I am reckoned here the first politician in the world, and by some a sort of prophet," boasted Lady Hester to Meryon in 1836. It is difficult to discriminate between her actual beliefs and the jargon she was supposed to believe. The atmosphere of superstition in which she lived, and the prophetic insight claimed by those with whom she came in contact, inspired her with faith in the supernatural. Only those who understand Eastern thought have given her credit for approaching these questions rationally and honestly.

Sir Richard Burton, writing on magic mirrors, said she

* See Kinglake's "Eothen," pp. 111-49. (London: John Ollivier, 1844.)

"frequently declared the spell by which the face of an absent person is thrown upon a mirror to be within the reach of the humblest and most contemptible of magicians, but the civilised world did not care to believe a prophetess." *

On the other hand, Dr. Bowring, who was refused an interview with her, cast doubts upon her sanity, declaring that she said to some French gentleman: "What, you don't believe in magic? Well, I will make my pipe-sticks walk upright into the room." "I should be very glad to see that," said the Frenchman. "You would be very glad, would you? Then, I will do it!" †

As a proof of her madness Bowring said she was possessed by a delusion that "under a certain stone guarded by a black dragon, governed by a sable magician under her control, all the treasures of the earth were concealed; the query naturally being, why did she not give the necessary orders and pay her debts." ‡

Dr. Garnett, who classed Lady Hester "among the religious enthusiasts and visionaries," tried her in the fire of her own kindling, and told her character by the stars. Unfortunately he calculated from an incorrect date, giving her natal day as February 12th, 1776.§

Meryon's attempt to explain her attitude is perhaps the best. Fatalism was her creed, credulity her assumption.

"Throughout Syria, and, I believe, the whole Ottoman Empire, the belief in magic and charms is universal," he wrote. "There is not a single person who does not resort to some means for counteracting the effects of the evil eye—such as spells by

* "Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah," p. 388. (London: G. Bell and Son, 1906.)

† "Recollections of a Long Life," by Lord Broughton (John Cam Hobhouse), 1909, vol. v., p. 292, (London: Murray.)

‡ "Journals of Caroline Fox," 1832, vol. i., p. 66. (Second Edition, 1838.)

§ Instead of March 12th. See "The Soul and the Stars," p. 14, by "A. G. Trent." 1893.

written papers, enchantments, and the like. Impotence, estrangement of affection, the murrain in cattle, blight in fruit-trees, anything the cause of which is not immediately obvious, is universally accounted for by witchcraft. Lady Hester, indeed, had imbibed all these notions; and, to judge from the substance of many conversations she held on the subject, no reasonable doubt can be entertained of the startling fact that she placed implicit faith in them.

"'Astrology,' she would say, 'is confined to the influence of the stars over people's birth and actions; but magic has to do with the devil. Sometimes it is by compact; as when, for a certain price, I say, for example, to an evil spirit, "If you will tell me what they have written from the Porte to Abdullah Pacha I will do so and so;" or if, by means which I know to be powerful enough to bring devils under my command, I say to them, "You must do this and that, and the other," they are obliged to obey, or I annihilate them.

"'There are persons,' she continued, 'who can write charms, by which they can effect the most diabolical purposes: but their charms are sometimes baffled by higher influences. I am an example: my star, more powerful than that on which they rely, renders their magic useless. So far, there is a connection between astrology and magic. But take care, doctor, there are men here who will slip a paper into your pocket unknown to you, and make you an idiot, or blind, or a hundred things. . . .'

"Now all this, the reader will say, looks like the grossest credulity. But, setting aside the observation that the greatest men among the ancients, as we know from their writings, entertained a similar creed, and that many eminent philosophers and jurisconsults, as Lord Bacon and Sir Matthew Hale, were actuated by similar convictions, it may be conjectured that Lady Hester Stanhope knew very well what a powerful weapon was this superstition, placed in the hands of those who understood how to make use of it. Whether premeditatedly or not, she more than once brought crafty and designing knaves into signal disrepute by attributing to them dealings of this sort, and thus punished or kept in awe those whose villainous machinations it might be impossible to detect, but of which there was little doubt, even though not tangible by the hand of justice."

"Lady Hester's professed opinions on the subject of charms and supernatural agency generally cannot be mistaken," added Dr. Meryon. "Nor, indeed, seeing how she mixed up such opinions with the actual business of life, allowing them to exercise a direct practical influence over her conduct in numerous instances, can there be any reason for supposing that she did not entirely believe in them, to all intents and purposes, as sincerely as the Syrians themselves. But I leave the consideration of this curious problem to the sagacity of the reader, limiting my more appropriate province to the simple record of her ladyship's actual life and conversations." *

In which decision Dr. Meryon showed undoubted wisdom, for the workings of Lady Hester's mind were often unfathomable.

* See "Memoirs," vol. i., pp. 275-80.

CHAPTER XXX

MERYON'S LAST VISIT

SIX years elapsed after Meryon's third visit to the East. He occasionally received letters from Lady Hester, but had given up the idea of ever seeing her again. The journeys of 1819 and 1830 had not been satisfactory enough to induce him to venture to Djoun unasked, but in 1836 Lady Hester appealed to him once more for help. Her failing health, her diminishing resources and her loneliness made it difficult for him to ignore her request, and her reliance on the old friendship put it practically out of his power to refuse.

Lady Hester's life had been uneventful during these years, and she had seen few people. Many who had travelled far to visit her were unable to gain admittance. Dr. Bowring, Poujoulat and Boutés were amongst those who proclaimed their disappointment abroad. But it was not fair to attribute her seclusion to inhospitality. She had many causes for refusing to receive visitors. She was seriously ill and depressed, troubled by sudden attacks of coughing which shook her gaunt frame and threatened suffocation; she was often without funds or provisions in the house, and practically in a state of siege. The country, owing to the Druse insurrection, swarmed with bandits and marauders, and her property was the only spot in Syria over which Ibrahim Pacha had no power. He dared not interfere with "the

prophetess," and left her severely alone, but communication with the outer world was difficult for her.

"Lady Hester has had a great fight with the Pacha," wrote a lady from Alexandria, on December 3rd, 1835, "having taken it into her head to protect seventy-six rich Arab families, and exempt them from the payment of taxes. After a long debate, the Pacha has given up the point, being unwilling to create a disturbance among his Syrian subjects, who consider Lady Hester as a mad woman, and therefore as holy. She is over head and ears in debt, and kept entirely by the Arabs. . . .

"I fear that my chance of seeing Lady Hester is very small; her last fancy is not to see any but French. At present the Duchesse de Plaisance and her daughter are living in her house; the Duchesse was pronounced quite mad in the lunatic asylum in which she was confined some years. They are dressed in white trowsers, worn under a gown of the same colour, with enormous sleeves, and wear white calico hats, which end in a high-peaked crown. A Frenchman lives with Lady Hester, and he is, somehow or other, soon to be the Messiah. They are always fighting as to which is to be the greatest personage among them. One of these quarrels is said to have ended thus: 'Vous, Madame! Vous la première! Je vous ferai placer dans ma cuisine.' They are to be married in the New Jerusalem, but the gentleman is impatient and wishes the ceremony to take place now; but Lady Hester will be the Messiah's bride. . . .

"I have written a letter to Lady Hester Stanhope, but I fear have no chance of seeing her. Colonel Campbell has just written to Lord Stanhope to say that, unless her enormous debts are paid, she must leave the country, as he will otherwise apply to our Government to stop the payment of her pension, and apply the amount to the discharge of her debts."*

Lady Hester's troubles, pecuniary and otherwise, were sufficient to induce her to work on the Doctor's ever-ready sympathies.

* "Diaries of a Lady of Quality from 1797 to 1844," pp. 327-8. (Longmans, Green and Co., 1884.) The letter is full of inaccuracies and misrepresentations.

276 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

"I hope," she wrote on August 21st, 1836, "I shall not claim in vain the assistance of an old friend, at the moment I most require one I can depend upon, to settle the business of my debts, etc., now made public. Money has been left me which has been concealed from me.* I could hardly at first believe it, until I was assured of it by a young lawyer, who had the fact from one of my Irish relations. I should wish you to come as soon as you can possibly make it convenient to yourself, and return when the business is over. . . .

"An English traveller, who has written, as I am informed, a very learned work, told a person that when M. Lamartine's book first came out in England, the impression was so strong that many people who did not personally know me talked of coming here to investigate my affairs and to offer their services, but they were prevented. A woman of high rank and good fortune,† who has built herself a *palais* in a remote part of America, has announced her intention of passing the rest of her life with me, so much has she been struck with my situation and conduct. She is nearly my age, and thirty-seven or thirty-eight years ago—I being personally unknown to her—was so taken with my general appearance that she never could divest herself of the thoughts of me, which have ever since pursued her. At last, informed by M. Lamartine's book where I was to be found, she took this extraordinary determination, and in the spring I expect her. She is now selling her large landed estate preparatory to her coming. She, as well as Lâila, the mare, is in the prophecy. The beautiful boy has also written, and is wandering over the face of the globe till destiny marks the period of our meeting.‡

"Such wonders, Doctor! Copy these signs upon another paper, and remain silent upon the subject. Bring with you your notes upon Palmyra, etc.—do not forget. Perhaps I may receive from you an answer to my former letter by the next steamboat; but, as it only remains an hour at Beirut, this must be sent off to be in waiting there. God bless you!"§

* This refers to the Irish estate, see pp. 295, 305.

† The Baroness de Fériat.

‡ Neither the lady nor the boy of the prophecy arrived.

§ "Memoirs," vol. i., pp. 240-2.

Meryon and Family

277

Thus entreated, Meryon engaged a governess to look after his daughter and be a companion to his wife, and on May 24th, 1837, the little party left Marseilles, arriving at Beirut on July 1st. Lady Hester was not pleased to hear that Meryon had brought his family with him.

"I could wish you, first of all," she wrote on that date, "to come here alone, to see a house at Sayda for your family, and to well understand each other before you bring them here. For your sake, I should ever wish to show civility to all who belong to you, but caprice I will never interfere with, for from my early youth I have been taught to despise it. Botrôos Metta, if he can be useful to Mrs. Meryon, may remain until your return; if not, he will come with you. I hope your health is quite recovered, and, in the end, that you will have no reason to regret your voyage." *

This time she refused to see Mrs. Meryon, and the servants were shrewd enough to sympathise with the Doctor. One of them said in French, "He will have one woman saying one thing in one ear, and the other saying the contrary in the other ear; well! he will be a clever gentleman if he reconciles them." Lady Hester went so far as to carry war into the enemy's camp. The incident was related by Meryon as follows:

"October 18.—I returned to Djoun, and employed myself busily in fitting up the cottage intended for our dwelling. The nearer the time approached for bringing my family close to her premises, the more Lady Hester seemed to regret having consented to the arrangement. Petty jealousies, inconsistent with a great mind, were always tormenting her. Of this a remarkable and somewhat ludicrous instance occurred during the latter part of the month of September. Most persons are probably aware that Mahometans have a religious horror of bells, and

* "Memoirs," vol. i., pp. 251-2.

in countries under their domination have never allowed of their introduction even into Christian churches. It is not uncommon, by way of contempt, to designate Europe as the land of bells. This pious abhorrence penetrates the arcana of private life, and in a Turkish house no such thing as a bell for calling the servants is ever to be seen. A clap of the hands, repeated three times, is the usual summons; and, as the doors are seldom shut, the sound can be easily heard throughout every part of the dwelling.

"Lady Hester, however, retained her European habits in this one particular, and perhaps there never existed a more vehement or constant bell-ringer. The bells hung for her use were of great size, so that the words *Gerass el Syt*, or my lady's bell, echoing from one mouth to another when she rang, made the most indolent start on their legs, until, at last, as nobody but herself in the whole territory possessed house-bells, the peasantry and menials imagined that the use of them was some special privilege granted to her by the Sublime Porte on account of her exalted rank, and she probably found it to her advantage not to disturb this very convenient supposition.

"On taking up our residence at Mar Elias there were two bells put by in a closet, which were replaced, for the use of my family, with bell-ropes to the saloon and dining-room, none of us ever suspecting that they could by any human ingenuity be considered otherwise than as most necessary appendages to a room; but we calculated without our host. This assumption of the dignity was held to be an act of *lesa majestas*, and the report of our proceedings was carried from one person to another until, at last, it reached Lady Hester's ears, endorsed with much wonder on the part of her maids how a doctor's wife could presume to set herself on an equality with a *meleki* (queen). Lady Hester, however, saw the absurdity of affecting any claim to distinction in such a matter, and therefore, vexed and mortified although it appears she was, she never said a word to me on the subject. But one morning in September, when we were all assembled at breakfast, on pulling the bell-rope, no sound responded, and, examining into the cause, we discovered that the strings had been cut by a knife and the bells forcibly wrenched from their places. Much conjecture was formed as to who could

The Mysterious Bells

279

have done all this mischief. The maids were questioned; the porter, the milkman, the errand-boy, the manservant, everybody, in short, in and about the place; but nobody knew anything of the matter. Understanding Arabic, I soon found there was some mystery in the business, and answers more and more evasive from the porter the harder he was pressed led to a presumption, amounting almost to a certainty, that her Ladyship's grand emissary, Osman el Chaôsh, had arrived late at night, armed with pincers, hammer, etcetera, and before daylight had carried off the bells to Lady Hester's residence. I concealed my conjecture from my family, wishing to cause no fresh source of irritation; and having occasion to write that day to Lady Hester, I merely added, as a postscript: 'The two bells have been stolen during the night, and I can find no certain clue to the thief. For although I have discovered that Osman el Chaôsh has been here secretly, I cannot think it likely that any one of your servants would presume to do such a thing without your orders, nor can I believe that your Ladyship would instruct anyone to do that clandestinely which a message from yourself to me would have effected so easily.'

"When I saw Lady Hester a day or two afterwards she never alluded to the bells, nor did I, and nothing was ever mentioned about them for two or three months, until, one day, she, being in a good humour, said, 'Doctor, it was I who ordered Osman to take away the bells. The people in this country must never suppose there is anyone connected with my establishment who puts himself on an equality with me, no matter in what. The Turks know of only one Pacha in a district; the person next to him is a nobody in his presence, not daring even to sit down or to speak unless told to do so. If I had let those bells hang much longer, the sound of my own would not have been attended to. As it is, half of my servants have become disobedient from seeing how my will is disputed by you and your family, who have always a hundred reasons for not doing what I wish to be done; and, as I said in my letter to Eugenia, I can't submit to render an account of my actions, for if I was not called upon to do so by Mr. Pitt, I am sure I shan't by other people; so let us say no more about it.' Of course, I complied with her whims, or, rather, I should say, admitted the good sense of her observa-

286 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

name, for I knew very well she never did anything without a kind or substantial motive. So, after that, the exclamation of *Grave et Sot* produced its magical effect." *

The letter referred to was written to Meryon's daughter Eugénie, on September 19th, 1837, and makes Lady Hester's attitude towards the Meryons perfectly clear. Dr. Meryon had taken his wife and family to the Convent of Mar Elias, because there was no cottage suitable for them nearer to Tyoun. There he was laid up with an inflamed wound in his leg.

"I was pained to find, my dear little Eugénie, that you misinterpreted your father's good-will towards me," wrote Lady Hester. "I must thank you and Mademoiselle Longchamp for your kind offers of assistance, but I must decline them, having taken a determination not to have anything more to do with the Doctor's family than if it did not exist in the country. I should forget my situation and rank in life were I to condescend to dispute and make daily explanations to my inferiors. To avoid this, I must give up all thoughts of making your acquaintance, although you are an object of interest to me, as would be all the children of the Doctor, even if he had a hundred. Request him, poor man! not to think about my letters or anything else that relates to me; only let him take care of his health. If I can be useful to a sick person, nothing is unpleasant to me, but when I cannot, or, rather, am not permitted to be, the history of the progress of sores is not very agreeable. I do not wish to hear of him till he is recovered. Writing must fatigue him, and I would rather be without letters from you or him.

"I have had a letter from M. Guys to-day in which he tells me he was thinking of taking a ride to see some houses to hire for your family. I shall send to Beirut on Thursday before daylight, and the Doctor's letters will go by that messenger. He had better write a few lines more to M. Guys to explain what situation and what sort of a house he would like, as it

* "Memoirs," vol. II., pp. 39-43.

would appear that I am grown a fool in my old age, and neither know my right hand from my left.

"The Doctor is aware that he may command anything my house contains which may be useful to him, but I shall neither send him anything nor inquire after him, as my messenger was thus ill received; and I do not think I can be called upon to put my eyes out by writing, when I more than want the sight I have left for my own affairs." *

Owing to certain tragic incidents connected with the death of a raving lunatic, Mrs. Meryon desired to leave Mar Elias, and Meryon again approached Lady Hester with a request for a cottage at Djoun. But she was unwilling to have the Meryons so near, and had asked M. Guys to hire a house at Beirut. She wrote to the Doctor on the 23rd :

"Whilst waiting for M. Guys' answer, I have some remarks to make worthy of your attention. I do not speak in wrath, my dear Doctor, but I do not see how, at this period, you are to help yourself, and it is plain to perceive that you will not be able in any way to accomplish the objects you came for. Therefore, I should deem it as an act of folly to stick you up as a sort of *maskara*† in the public eye at Beirut merely to write a few letters. The whole of my business M. Guys offered to undertake before I sent for you, and to come here and write for me; but I had reasons for wishing you to come, which no longer exist, for under no circumstances do I see that you would be comfortable near me, nor should I wish for it, either at present or in future. Therefore, if you like to pass the winter at Cyprus, where, perhaps, you would be more comfortable than at Beirut, you are at full liberty to do so. When my affairs are settled, you might then, if Cyprus pleases you, purchase a little *terre* there, or return to Europe, as you like best.

"I am very glad that you wrote to M. Guys yourself, for I had described a country house near some village, and you have

* "Memoirs," vol. i., pp. 380-1.

† *Maskara* means a kind of show.

282 **Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope**

described a sort of coffee house near the gate of the town. You talked to me of Mrs. Meryon's great love of retirement (which I laughed at at the time), and therefore she chooses a house upon the high road. But leave all that childish, vulgar stuff; I do not wish for a hasty answer, as this subject requires reflection. Try and make yourself comfortable, and I shall find means of settling my business to my satisfaction; only, I must have a clear and distinct answer, that I may make arrangements accordingly.—Yours sincerely,

“HESTER LUCY STANHOPE.

“P.S.—Should my messenger retard, it is for M. Guys to be able to answer your letter about the house. I enclosed your two letters to be forwarded to England. Do not fidget yourself about me. I have made awful sacrifices in my life; surely I can make a small one when I know what it is. This is what distinguishes the truly great from the low and vulgar.” *

A few days later she wrote again, still on the subject of the house and the question of the Meryons' departure, to say that M. Guys had informed her in his last letter that the village was infected, but he did not mention with what malady. She could think of no better place for the Meryons to betake themselves to than Cyprus, but before they decided she wished to discuss the subject with the Doctor. “Perhaps the quarantine will be so long, and the weather so bad,” she wrote, “as to make your return as difficult as it may be disagreeable.” Then she begged the Doctor to have a little patience, as she could decide nothing at the moment. She told him she would not send his letter to M. Guys until she had seen him again, as she did not wish to give him useless trouble.

Before she dispatched the missive, she wound up sadly: “I have considered half an hour, but to no purpose.”

* “Memoirs,” vol. i., pp. 382–3.

Her letter is interesting because in 1829 she had written to Dr. Meryon telling him that she expected him to give her his word of honour that he had burnt, and would in future burn, every writing of hers that he had in his possession. This wish he appears to have fulfilled literally, and very few autograph letters to him seem to have escaped the holocaust. In a codicil to her will, dated 1819,* Lady Hester ordered that all her papers, manuscripts and books in the East should be burnt, and anyone in her service who carried out this clause was to be held blameless.

During his last visit Meryon collected the material for his three volumes of *Memoirs*, which include the most entertaining anecdotes and sprightliest stories of Lady Hester.

Day after day Pitt's niece and her physician remained for hours in her ill-furnished room at Djoun chatting lightly about the past and the people she had known, amid clouds of smoke. Lady Hester lay usually in her bed, her pipe in her mouth, talking politics, philosophy, or scandal, according to her mood, and "Closing her periods with a whiff that would have made the Duchess of Rutland stare with astonishment, could she have risen from her tomb to have seen her quondam friend, the brilliant ornament of a London drawing-room, clouded in fumes so that her features were sometimes invisible."† Lady Hester had not a covering to her bed that was not burnt into twenty holes by the sparks and ashes that had fallen from her pipe. The pipe was to her what a fan was in a lady's hand—a means of having something to do.

On Wednesday the Doctor never saw her. It was her unlucky day. She shut herself up every Tuesday evening, and did no business for twenty-four hours. This was one of her superstitions. At other times her old energy asserted itself. After dictating "with the most enlarged political

* See p. 317.

† "Memoirs," vol. iii., p. 189.

284 **Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope**

views, papers that concerned the welfare of a pachalik," the next moment she would turn with ease "to some trivial details about the composition of a house-paint, the making of butter, the drenching of a sick horse, the choosing lambs, or the cutting out of a maid's apron. She had a finger in everything, and in everything was an adept." *

* "Memoirs," vol. I., p. 130.

CHAPTER XXXI

PÜCKLER-MUSKAU

THE winter of 1837-8 wore slowly away. Lady Hester's health, which was always precarious during this period of the year, grew worse. The Doctor, in spite of her hostile attitude towards him and although meditating upon his departure, as yet took no definite steps to hasten it. He read to her when she was well enough to listen, wrote for her when she was well enough to dictate, and did what he could to alleviate the worry her worthless crew of servants occasioned her. Although she had sworn never to return to England "except in chains," she railed against fate because she was abandoned and forgotten in a strange country.

With the spring there came a diversion from her misery in the shape of Prince Pückler-Muskau—a strange character, author and dandy, who had divorced his wife because he had run through his patrimony and could not keep her, and who travelled about in the hope of finding an heiress who would lavish her affections and her wealth upon him. He trusted by these means to be enabled to maintain his former wife in luxury, and he remained on friendly terms with her to the end. When he visited Lady Hester he had almost, but not quite, given up his hope of finding a suitable young bride.

Knowing how wary her Ladyship was of receiving visitors, and determined not to leave Syria until he had been granted

an interview, he began by writing her a half-emotional, half-deferential letter :

"As I am aware that you do not care for visits from strangers, having met on the one hand with idle curiosity and on the other with frank indiscretion, I assure you, madame, that I approach you with diffidence, in my turn to beg your permission to pay you my respects. I must assure you, however, that I have anticipated the pleasure of meeting you for many years past, and that it would be an act of cruelty on your part if you refuse me the happiness, at the moment when it might be fulfilled, of paying homage to the Queen of Palmyra and the niece of the great Pitt."

The Prince did not sue in vain, and after some correspondence, the date of his visit was fixed. He was received by the Doctor, who told him that Lady Hester expected him to stay a week, but that she rarely received visitors before midnight, on which account, he continued, laughing, your visit will last not so much eight days—but eight nights. "Capital!" cried the Prince, "not only is that as it should be in this land of a thousand and one nights, but it suits my nocturnal habits admirably, and I assure you I anticipate my first midnight rendezvous with real impatience."

His conversation with Lady Hester began simply enough.

"Since my fortune melted away," she said, "I live like a Dervish, and have no luxuries. The older I grow the fewer are my needs, thank God, and the more eagerly I try to approach nature, from which our civilisation tends to separate us. My roses are my jewels, the sun, moon, and stars my time-pieces, water and fruit my fare. From your face," she went on mischievously, "I see you are a confirmed epicure! How will you stand the life here for a whole week?"

Fortunately Lady Hester did not condemn her guests to a fruit and water diet when she had anything better

to give them. Excellent fare accompanied the long talks on astrology, the second coming of the Messiah, the famous mares, the sins of the Emir Beshyr, her relations with the Arabs, and the other stock topics of conversation to which she treated them.

Dr. Meryon described the Prince as a tall man, about fifty years of age. He was dressed in a loose morning-gown, with white trousers, and a yellow scarf thrown over his shoulders somewhat for effect, with a *casquette* on, and having the air and demeanour of what he was—a man of the world and of high birth.

“He had a chameleon crawling about on the tube of his pipe, and on his chair; and, every now and then, the exclamation of ‘*Ou donc est le cameleon? Ou est mon petit bijou?*’ made me fear at first we were going to have a second edition of Monsieur Lamartine with his lapdog, who, in talking to it in all those endearing terms which the French use towards pet animals, and in making more fuss about its food, bed, and the like, than humanity requires, had greatly lessened himself in the estimation of both Turks and Christians in a country where exaggerated and unnatural phraseology is never applied to brute animals.”*

At another time the Prince appeared in

“an immense Leghorn hat, lined under the brim with green taffetas, which shaded his fair complexion. An Arab keffiyah was thrown over his shoulders in the shape of a scarf; and a pair of blue pantaloons of ample dimensions marked an approach towards the Turkish *sherwads*, those indescribable brogues which from their immense width, take yards of cloth to make them. His boots were Parisian in their cut, and it was clear, from the excellent fit, that he felt his pretensions to a thorough-bred foot were now to be decided magisterially. It was singular enough that every traveller who came to Djoun after M. Lamartine’s book had appeared seemed to think that Lady Hester Stanhope

* “*Memoirs*,” vol. iii., pp. 39–40.

288 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

would necessarily make comments on his feet, and so tried to screw them into an arch, under the hollow of which water might run without wetting the sole. One man, an Italian, had gone so far as to wear laced half-boots like women's *brodekins*, and stuck them in my face, whilst we were smoking a pipe together preparatory to his interview, as much as to say 'Will these qualify me as high born?' But the prince had no occasion to use such artifices to set off his person; he was a fine man, whose exterior denoted high birth, and could not but leave a favourable impression." *

Lady Hester thought the Prince very handsome.

"And how handy he is, too," she added. "Do you know, when I wanted him to write some memorandums down, he fetched the pen and ink, opened the card-table, pulled out the legs, spread the things out before him—a servant could not do it better. And, only think! he writes without spectacles, though he is a good deal older than you are." "I supposed him to be about my age," said I. "No, he is older," continued Lady Hester; "he is a man upon sixty." †

Lady Hester saw the Prince twice a day, once before dinner, and afterwards in the evening, when he generally remained until a late hour. She "began to obtain an ascendancy over him, such as she never failed to do over those who came within the sphere of her attraction." ‡ He tried to discover the truth about the handsome sheik to whom she was said to have been married. She showed him a letter from "Dayr, the Lion of the Desert, to Hester, the Star of the Morning," and he asked her whether Dayr, who was the son-in-law of Mahannah el Fadel, had been her lover. To this question she gave her celebrated answer that no Arab had looked upon her in the light either of a man or of a woman, and the mystery of the sheik was

* "Memoirs," vol. iii., pp. 90-1.

† *Ibid.*, p. 96.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 106.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pückler Muskau', with a stylized flourish at the end.

PRINCE PÜCKLER MUSKAU (1833-1871)

therefore no nearer a solution. To the end she treasured her secret, and though rumour whispered the name of the chief of the Wahabees, or of the Prince of the Mountain, no documentary evidence has been forthcoming.

Lady Hester was pleased that the Prince stayed a week. She thought it would mortify the Emir Beshyr, to whom the Prince had sent three successive messengers, each time to put off his visit twenty-four hours longer, whilst it would have a good effect in the eyes of the people, who saw that he contrived expedients to stay on at her Ladyship's, although from day to day he made preparations for going.

"He must go to-morrow," Lady Hester said to Meryon; "he kills me by these long conversations, and he is so tiresome, asking for this explanation and that explanation. I said to him last night, when he could not comprehend something, '*Est ce que votre esprit est dans les ténébres?*' This is the way I talk to princes; but to you forsooth I must not say so. I must not call you a fool when you are one, but you must go and sulk and turn crusty; but I will, though—neither you nor the greatest king on earth shall make me alter my ways a tittle." *

The Prince having complained of being indisposed, Lady Hester prescribed a black draught, a favourite remedy which she tried a little later on fifteen members of the Duke of Bavaria's suite.

In spite of his nauseous dose, the Prince left Djoun as well pleased with Lady Hester's entertainment as her visitors usually were. He was the last person of importance who saw her, for she was too ill to receive Duke Maximilian. -- Before a year had passed she was immured in her walled-up house a penniless, broken-hearted and dying woman.

* "*Memoirs*," vol. iii., pp. 118-9.

CHAPTER XXXII

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

DR. MERYON was torn between a desire to leave Djoun and the wish to stand by Lady Hester to the last, but he could do nothing to ameliorate her financial position, which was exceedingly mortifying.

"My debts," she had said to him, "began in 1822—from 1822 to 1823—and in a couple of years I owed £3,000; not that I had actually borrowed that sum. I was obliged to take up money owing to the revolutions in the country; I speak of the time in which there were three pachas, with an army, encamped before the gates of Acre, and when the Emir Beshyr, the governor of the mountain, had fled to Egypt; and such a number of persecuted people took refuge under my roof that this caused me great expense. Expecting remittances from England at that time, which I never received, I placed the date of the bonds for the money which I borrowed at only four and six months at twenty-five per cent. This, with their interest and compound interest, and the loss upon the money which I was obliged to take at the price they chose to give it, amounted in three years to £3,000. Now, God knows what it is! My income would now only simply suffice, after paying the interest of these bonds, to pay my servants and tradespeople and put a little provision in my house. You must understand that when I drew for my pension at Constantinople I paid the dollars at 6 piastres, or $6\frac{1}{2}$; I received them at Beirut at $10\frac{1}{2}$, and repaid them again in the Metouali country and at Sayda, where I got my provisions, at $8\frac{1}{2}$; therefore, I often lost 100 per cent. The house of Coutts and Co., since old Coutts's death, desired me

only to draw my drafts upon them through a merchant's house at Constantinople, and there was a serious loss and inconvenience to me in doing so." *

She was troubled by a host of creditors, and unfortunately one of them, a money-lender, Homsy by name, persisted in his demands for payment. Unable to obtain his money from Lady Hester he applied to the authorities, and the matter was finally referred to Colonel Campbell, Consul-General in Syria. In 1834 this gentleman appealed to the Foreign Office, but for three years no definite action was taken by the Home Government. Early in 1838 Colonel Campbell was instructed to inform Lady Hester tactfully that her pension was in danger of being attached for payment of debt.†

"I trust that your Ladyship will believe my sincerity," he wrote from Cairo on January 10th, 1838, "when I assure you with how much reluctance and pain it is that I feel myself again‡ imperatively called upon to address you upon the subject of the debt so long due by you to Mr. Homsy.

"The Government of the Viceroy has addressed that of Her Majesty upon the subject, and, by a dispatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, I am led to believe that a confidential friend of your Ladyship will have already written to you to entreat you to settle this affair.

* "Memoirs," vol. i., pp. 343-4.

† The correspondence appeared in *The Times* of November 27th, 1838.

‡ At that word "again," Lady Hester made the following remarks: "He never addressed me on the subject, neither has anyone else. Nearly two years ago, there was a report in the Bazaar that my debts had been spoken of to the King; that my pension was to be seized; that I was to be put under consular jurisdiction; and a set of extravagant things that nobody ever heard the like; and certainly those who had ventured to charge themselves with such a message would have found I was a cousin of Lord Camelford's.

"Another version was, that the King talked very good sense upon the subject and had taken my part, and had been much surprised that I had been so neglected by my family, to whom he said some sharp and unpleasant things. There the matter rested, and I heard no more of it, until Colonel Campbell's letter."

292 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

"Your Ladyship must be aware that, in order to procure your pension from Her Majesty's Government, it is necessary to sign a declaration and to have the consular certificate at the expiration of each quarter.

"I know that this certificate has hitherto been signed by M. Guys, the consul of France at Beirut; but, in strict legality, it ought to be certified by the British, and not by any foreign consul; and, should your Ladyship absolutely refuse the payment of this claim, I should feel myself, however deeply I may regret it, forced to take measures to prevent the signature of the French or any other consul but the British being considered as valid, and consequently your bill for your pension will not be paid at home. I shall communicate this, if your Ladyship's conduct should oblige me so to do, to M. Guys and the other foreign consuls of Beirut in order that your certificate may not be signed, and also send this under flying seal to Mr. Moore, Her Majesty's consul at Beirut, in order that he may take the necessary steps to make this known to those consuls, if your Ladyship should call on them to sign the quarterly certificate for your pension.

"I trust that your Ladyship will be pleased to favour me with a reply, informing me of your intentions, and which reply will be forwarded to me by Mr. Moore.

"I beg your Ladyship will be assured of the pain which I experience in being obliged to discharge this truly unpleasant duty, as well of the respect with which I have the honour to remain, your Ladyship's most obedient humble servant,

"P. CAMPBELL,

"Her Majesty's Agent for Egypt and Syria."

Deeply pained by this cruel letter, Lady Hester pondered over the course she was to pursue in response to it. To Colonel Campbell her reply was non-committal. She sent it open in a letter to the British Consul at Beirut.

Lady Hester Stanhope to Colonel Campbell

"Djoun, February 4, 1838.

"I shall give no sort of answer to your letter of the 10th of January (received the 27th) until I have seen a copy of Her

Letter to the Queen

293

Majesty's commands respecting my debt to Mr. Homsy, or of the official orders from Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, as also of Mr. Homsy's claim, as well as of the statement sent to England—to whom and through whom—in order that I may know whom I have to deal with, as well as be able to judge of the accuracy of the documents.

"I hope in future that you will not think it necessary to make any apologies for the execution of your duty; on the contrary, I should wish to recommend you all to put on large Brutus wigs when you sit on the woolsack at Alexandria or at Beirut."

To Mr. Moore, the British Consul, she wrote on the same date :

"The sacrifice which I have made of your acquaintance and your society that you might stand quite clear of everything that affects me, appears to be to little purpose. You will have some very disagreeable business to go through, as you will be made Colonel Campbell's honourable agent, and he the agent of the wise Lord Palmerston, and he the agent of your magnificent Queen. There is Colonel Campbell's answer, which I leave open for your perusal, as he did this.

"If in the end I find that you deserve the name of a true Scotchman, I shall never take ill the part that you may have taken against me, as it appears to be consistent with your duty in these dirty times.

"I remain, with truth and regard, yours,

"HESTER LUCY STANHOPE."

A week later she decided on a course of action which she set forth in letters to the Queen, to Lord Wellington and to the Speaker on February 12th, 1838.

Lady Hester Stanhope to the Queen

"Djoun.

"Your Majesty will allow me to say that few things are more disgraceful and inimical to royalty than giving commands

294 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

without examining all their different bearings, and casting, without reason, an aspersion upon the integrity of any branch of a family who had faithfully served their country and the house of Hanover.

"As no inquiries have been made of me what circumstances induced me to incur the debts alluded to, I deem it unnecessary to enter into any details upon the subject. I shall not allow the pension given by your royal grandfather to be stopped by force, but I shall resign it for the payment of my debts, and with it the name of English subject, and the slavery that is at present annexed to it; and, as your Majesty has given publicity to the business by your orders to consular agents, I surely cannot be blamed in following your royal example."

Lady Hester Stanhope to the Duke of Wellington

"Djoun, February 12, 1838.

"MY DEAR DUKE,—If you merit but half the feeling and eloquent praise I heard bestowed upon you shortly before I saw you for the first time, you are the last man in the world either to be offended or to misconstrue my motives in writing to you upon the subject in question, or not to know how to account for the warmth of the expressions I may make use of, which are only characteristic of my disposition.

"Your Grace's long residence in the East will have taught you that there is no common-rate character in England an adequate judge what manner of living best answers among a semi-barbarous people, and how little possible it is to measure one's expenses where frequent revolutions and petty wars are carried on without any provision for the sufferers, from its being the duty of everyone to assist them as his humanity may dictate or as his circumstances may afford.

"Acre besieged for seven months—some days 7,000 balls thrown in in twenty-four hours—at last, taken by storm, and little more than 200 of the garrison remaining—then the wretched inhabitants, who expected to find succour from their old friends in the country, finding their backs turned upon them in the dread and awe they stood in of Ibrahim Pacha; nay, it is very strange to say that the Franks likewise held back in a

most extraordinary manner. Therefore, these unhappy people had no resource but in me, and I did the best I could for them all. Mahomet Ali, Ibrahim Pacha, Sheriff Pacha, all set at me at once, in order to make me give up certain persons, who immediately would have lost their heads for having fought well in the cause which they were engaged in. I opposed them all round single-handed, and said that I neither protected these persons in the English or French name, but in my own, as a poor Arab, who would not give up an unhappy being but with his own life; that there was no other chance of making me bend by any other means than by attempting mine. In this manner I saved some unfortunate beings, whom I got rid of by degrees by sending them back to their own country or providing for them at a distance in some way or another. Can you, as a brave soldier, blame me for what I have done? I should have acted in the same way before your eyes to the victims of your sword. Then the host of orphans, and widows and little children, who, to feed or clothe for nearly two years, took away all the ready money with which I ought in part to have paid my debts, and caused new ones! Yet I am no swindler, and will not appear like one. Your Queen had no business to meddle with my affairs. In due time, please God, I should have known how to arrange to satisfy everybody, even if I left myself a beggar. If she pretends to have a right to stop my pension, I resign it altogether, as well as the name of an English subject, for there is no family that has served their country and the crown more faithfully than mine has done, and I am not inclined to be treated with *moins d'égards* than was formerly shown to a gentleman-like highwayman.

"I have been every day in expectation of a reply from Sir Francis Burdett respecting a large property which is said to have been left me in Ireland, and which has been concealed from me for many years. In case of its coming into my hands, I shall still not keep my pension, in order to cut off every communication with the English Government, from whom only proceed acts of folly which any moment may rebound upon an individual. I chose Sir Francis Burdett to look into my affairs because I believe him to be a truly conscientious, honest man. Although we always disagreed upon politics, we were always the

best friends. It appears to me that he is beginning to see things in their proper light. You may say it is strange that I apply to a person out of my own family. My brother, Lord Stanhope, having dined with Lord Holland, to meet Mr. Fox, when Mr. Pitt was on his death-bed,* when I regretted this unhappy inadvertency, which I believed it to be, I was so shocked with the cold-blooded answer that he gave me that, in the agitation I was in, I made a vow never to see him again. This I have kept, and have had no connexion or communication with him since the period of Mr. Pitt's death. Therefore, all that I have to entreat of your Grace is to allow me to appear in the light in which I really stand—attached to humanity and attached to royalty and attached to the claims that one human being has upon another. Nor can I allow myself to be deemed an intriguer, because I have said here, in all societies, that persons who abet those who attempt to shake the throne of Sultan Mahmoud, shake the throne of their own sovereign, and therefore commit high treason; and among that class of persons I do not choose to rank myself. Nor am I to be reckoned an incendiary when I seek to vindicate my own character, that never was marked with either baseness or folly. It may have been, perhaps, with too little consideration for what are called by the world my own interests, and which I, in fact, despise, or at least only consider in a secondary point of view. There is nobody more capable of making the Queen understand that a Pitt is a unique race than your Grace: there is no trifling with them.

"I have sent a duplicate of the enclosed letter to Her Majesty to my Lord Palmerston, through the hands of the English consul, Mr. Moore. If it has not reached her safe, I hope that you will see this one does, or otherwise I shall put it in the 'Augsburg Gazette' or in an American newspaper."

When the letter was finished she gave a deep sigh, in despair, that it should go forth from her hands so different in paper, seal, and address, from those of her early days, when she reigned in Downing Street. She complained that

* Here Lady Hester's memory failed her.

Meryon had only put two *et ceteras* in the address, "as though the Duke were a nobody."

Her next letter was to Mr. Speaker Abercrombie.

"Djoun, February 12, 1838.

"Probably the wheel-horse has forgotten his driver, but the latter has not forgotten him.* I am told that the chief weight of the carriage of state bears upon you; if so, it must be a ponderous one indeed, if I can judge by a specimen of the talent of those who guide it.

"You, who have read and thought a great deal upon men and manners, must be aware that there are situations almost unknown in Europe in which persons, in what is called a semi-barbarous country, cannot extricate themselves with honour without taking a part either for or against humanity; besides, there are extraordinary gusts of knowledge, of extraordinary information, which, if you do not take advantage of them at the moment, are lost to you for ever. I have, therefore, exceeded my pecuniary means, but always with the hope of extricating myself without the assistance of anyone, or at least (and ever before my eyes, should the worst come to the worst) with that of selling the reversions of what I possess. Your magnificent Queen has made me appear like a bankrupt in the world and partly like a swindler, having given strict orders that one usurer's account must be paid, or my pension stopped, without taking into consideration others who have equal claims upon me. Her Majesty has not thrown the gauntlet before a driveller or a coward. Those who are the advisers of these steps cannot be wise men.

"Whatever men's political opinions may be, if they act from conscientious motives, I have always respected them, and you know that I have had friends in all parties. Therefore, without any reference to the present or past political career of ministers or Her Majesty's advisers, their conduct would appear to me, respecting myself, identically as it was, gentlemanlike or black-guard. But, having had but too strong a specimen of the latter

* This alludes to the childhood of Lady Hester Stanhope, when she had played at horses with Mr. Abercrombie.

by their attempting to bully a Pitt, and to place me under consular control, it is sufficient for me to resign the name of an English subject, for the justice granted to the slave of despotism far exceeds that which has been shown to me.—Believe me, with esteem and regard, yours,

“HESTER LUCY STANHOPE.”

In a letter to the Viscount Ebrington, written on March 29th, 1838, Lady Hester was still less guarded in her expressions.

“MY DEAR LORD EBRINGTON,—Your letter of the 26th of December reached me a few days ago, and it gave me great satisfaction to find you had not altogether forgotten me or my interests. I am so ignorant of what passes in Europe, generally speaking, that I was not aware that pensions were to be revised. The first I heard of it was from a traveller (Mr. Vesey Foster), having mentioned about a fortnight ago that such was the intention of Government; but, as I did not see him, I had no opportunity of inquiring into particulars. You tell me that you are on the committee, and that whatever I have to say respecting my pension I had better write it to you. I have nothing to say. You can hardly suppose that I would owe a pension to the commiseration of a pettifogging committee, when I refused Mr. Fox’s liberal proposition of securing me a handsome income by a grant of Parliament; neither should I, under any circumstances, lower the name of my dear old King, or my own, by giving any explanation. It was His Majesty’s pleasure to give me a pension—that is sufficient, or ought to be sufficient. New-coined royalties I do not understand, nor do I wish to understand them nor any of their proceedings. My ultimatum respecting my pension I have given to the Duke of Wellington, founded on the impudent letter of Colonel Campbell, a copy of which I enclose.”

Some months passed before she received the formal answer to her letter to Queen Victoria:

The Queen's Reply

299

Lord Palmerston to Lady Hester Stanhope

"Foreign Office, April 25, 1838.

"MADAM,—I am commanded by the Queen to acquaint you that I have laid before Her Majesty your letter of the 12th of February, of this year.

"It has been my duty to explain to Her Majesty the circumstances which may be supposed to have led to your writing that letter, and I have now to state to your Ladyship that any communications which have been made to you on the matters to which your letter refers, either through the friends of your family or through Her Majesty's agent and consul-general at Alexandria, have been suggested by nothing but a desire to save your Ladyship from the embarrassment which might arise if the parties who have claims upon you were to call upon the consul-general to act according to the strict line of his duty, under the capitulations between Great Britain and the Porte.

"I have the honour to be, madam, your Ladyship's most obedient humble servant,

"PALMERSTON."

To this she replied in July :

"MY LORD,—If your diplomatic dispatches are as obscure as the one which now lies before me, it is no wonder that England should cease to have that proud preponderance in her foreign relations which she once could boast of.

"Your Lordship tells me that you have thought it your duty to explain to the Queen the subject which caused me to address Her Majesty; I should have thought, my Lord, that it would have been your duty to have made those explanations prior to having taken the liberty of using Her Majesty's name, and alienated from her and her country a subject who, the great and small must acknowledge (however painful it may be to some) has raised the English name in the East higher than anyone has yet done, besides having made many philosophical researches of every description for the advantage of human nature at large, and this without having spent one farthing of the public money. Whatever may be the surprise created in the minds of statesmen

300 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

of the old school respecting the conduct of Government towards me, I am not myself in the least astonished; for when the son of a king, with a view of enlightening his own mind and the world in general, had devoted part of his private fortune to the purchase of a most invaluable library at Hamburgh, he was flatly refused an exemption from the custom-house duties; but, if report speaks true, had an application been made to pass band-boxes, millinery, inimitable wigs, and invaluable rouge, it would have been instantly granted by Her Majesty's ministers, if we may judge by precedents. Therefore, my lord, I have nothing to complain of; yet I shall go on fighting my battles, campaign after campaign.

"Your Lordship gives me to understand that the insult which I have received was considerably bestowed upon me to avoid some dreadful, unnameable misfortune which was pending over my head. I am ready to meet with courage and resignation every misfortune it may please God to visit me with, but certainly not insult from man. If I can be accused of high crimes and misdemeanours, and that I am to stand in dread of the punishment thereof, let me be tried, as I believe I have a right to be, by my peers; if not, then, by the voice of the people. Disliking the English because they are no longer English—no longer that hardy, honest, bold people that they were in former times—yet, as some few of this race must remain, I should rely in confidence upon their integrity and justice when my case had been fully examined.

"It is but fair to make your Lordship aware that, if by the next packet there is nothing definitely settled respecting my affairs, and that I am not cleared in the eyes of the world of aspersions intentionally or unintentionally thrown upon me, I shall break up my household and build up the entrance gate to my premises, there remaining, as if I was in a tomb, till my character has been done justice to, and a public acknowledgment put in the papers, signed and sealed by those who have aspersed me. There is no trifling with those who have Pitt blood in their veins upon the subject of integrity, nor expecting that their spirit would ever yield to the impertinent interference of consular authority.

"Meanly endeavouring (as Colonel Campbell has attempted

to do) to make the origin of this business an application of the Viceroy of Egypt to the English Government, I must, without having made any inquiries upon the subject, exculpate his highness from so low a proceeding. His known liberality in all such cases, from the highest to the lowest class of persons, is such as to make one the more regret his extraordinary and reprehensible conduct towards his great master, and that such a man should become totally blinded by vanity and ambition, which must in the end prove his perdition, an opinion I have loudly given from the beginning.

"Your Lordship talks to me of the capitulations with the Sublime Porte: what has that to do with a private individual's having exceeded his finances in trying to do good? If there is any punishment for that, you had better begin with your ambassadors, who have often indebted themselves at the different courts of Europe as well as at Constantinople. I myself am so attached to the Sultan that, were the reward of such conduct that of losing my head, I should kiss the sabre wielded by so mighty a hand, yet, at the same time, treat with the most ineffable contempt your trumpery agents, as I shall never admit of their having the smallest power over me; if I did, I should belie my origin." *

Lady Hester repudiated her country as she had repudiated her father's family. She claimed to be a Pitt and gloried in her descent from the great Chatham. In the last struggle against powers far too strong for her, she called to her aid the spirit inherited from "Diamond" Pitt, her fighting ancestor.

Nothing would satisfy her but that her daring correspondence should appear in the papers, and she left no means unturned to obtain this result. When Pückler-Muskau left her in May she begged him to do what he could to put her case before the public. But he thought her letters were wanting in respect, and did not bestir himself. On July 25th, 1838, he wrote to her from Aleppo:

* From *The Times* of November 27th, 1838.

302 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

"I am sorry to inform you that the insertion of your letter to the Queen in the 'Allgemeine Zeitung' met with some unexpected difficulties, and I shall now make an attempt to have it appear in some French paper. Though very much vexed by this contretemps at first, I am now rather glad of it, because the coronation ceremony occupying everyone's mind and attention in Europe—where nothing of a more interesting nature is likely now to happen—that it wouldn't have been the proper time for your publication. If it appears after it, the effect, on the contrary, will be doubled (sic), like a heavy rain after a fine sunny day is felt the more acutely." *

In the end it fell to Dr. Meryon's lot to arrange for the publication of the correspondence, and no doubt Lady Hester's anxiety that he should undertake this task influenced her in urging him to hasten his departure.

An attempt was made to arouse public opinion against the action taken by the Government, in the hope that tardy justice might be done her. The appeal ran:

"Though many eccentricities may have marked her Ladyship's career, her courage, her fortitude, her generosity, and the exercise of those virtues which have gained for her the love of a whole people, are known to all the world, and should, we think, have been enough of themselves, to say nothing of the claim which the niece and secretary of Mr. Pitt has to our natural respect, to have secured her from the indignities to which she has been subjected by the time-serving policy of Lord Palmerston." †

According to *The Times* of December 6th, 1838, the Government disclaimed any intention of depriving Lady Hester of her pension, but the arrears did not reach her. Little response was made to her appeal to the sympathy

* "Briefwechsel des Fürsten Hermann von Pückler-Muskau," vol. v., p. 38. (Berlin, 1874.)

† *The Times*, November 27th, 1838.

of the people. They did not even express regret that she had determined she would be an Englishwoman no longer. Such a statement had no particular force. She was met by indifference or mild amusement, harder to bear than reproaches and contempt.

Only one champion took up cudgels on her behalf, her old friend Sir William Napier, who wrote to *The Times* on December 4th, reproving those unthinking people who had been humorous at her expense.

"Her influence is vast with the Arab tribes," he wrote, "and with all those who have suffered from Ibrahim's army, or who sigh over the tottering condition of the Turkish empire. She, more than any person, can secure to England the friendship of nations whose goodwill must be vitally essential to our interests, when—and the time must soon come—we have to contend with Russia for the independence of the Porte. And if her disposition was not too noble, too magnanimous, to seek such revenge, English travellers in the East might bitterly rue the insults offered to Lady Hester Stanhope." *

His letter gave Lady Hester immense pleasure. She replied to it from Djoun, on February 11th, 1839:

"Good cometh out of evil. Who would have imagined that this disagreeable business would have been the means of my finding out and trying the friendship of one whom I always thought well of, but from whom I could hardly expect after so many years so manly, so kind a demonstration of interest in my welfare? The last communication I had with your dear family was from your brother when at Corfu; the distance from hence not great, but the communication so very uncertain that I did not accept the offer he made me of conveying letters to England. I have often tried to make particular inquiries after you all, but have never succeeded to my satisfaction. Your

* "Life of General Sir William Napier," 1864, vol. i., p. 529. (By kind permission of Mr. John Murray.)

brother's book I have heard highly spoken of by those who knew him not; others said he had lost an arm. Believe, my dear William, that the friendship and interest I ever felt for you all has not in the least diminished, and few things would give me greater satisfaction than a long and comfortable letter from you giving me details respecting you all—where you are individually to be found; married, and to whom; children, how many; age, beauty, etc. What is dear, good, kind Richard about? Has he followed the law? Does it answer to him, etc.? One sister, I think, only remains; do not forget her when you kindly remember me to *all* your brothers. I have ten thousand interesting things to speak of, but they must be the subject of another letter. You, the friend and companion of the dear brothers I have lost, deserve my confidence." (Here follow some family details.)

"There is my crime, to be independent. I am not in good health, but in good spirits; I have every reason to be so, as you will hereafter know. I have done my duty, I hope, to God, to man, and even to the brute creation. It is a strange thing to have singled out one poor woman to abuse and be hard upon in every way, when so many women of fashion spend fortunes in dress and folly and run into debt without any reason whatever. But all is written; mortified I am not; I should be glad to find those who could mortify me! I am a mite, a very mite in my own eyes, before men I have met with from the extremity of the East, but a giant before Lord Palmerston and his squad." *

* "Life of General Sir William Napier," vol. i., pp. 530-1. Edited by H. A. Bruce. (London: Murray, 1864.)

CHAPTER XXXIII

DEATH AND BURIAL

WHEN Lady Hester wrote the bitter words "there is my crime, to be independent," she had been forced to abandon the last hope of retrieving her fallen fortunes. Believing that she was heiress to an estate in Ireland left by Lord Kilmorey, she had written first to Lord Hardwicke and then to Sir Francis Burdett for definite information. But no helpful news had come to her from them, and her position was desperate.

"We were now again without money in the house, the last ten thousand piastres having been spent," Meryon had written as early as March 23rd, 1838. "No letter came from Sir Francis Burdett. Lady Hester's pension was suspended. Seven thousand piastres were due to the people for a quarter's wages; and, in consequence of the reports current even in the bazárs, the baths, and the barbers' shops at Beirut, that her income had been stopped by the Queen, there was little likelihood of her bills being negociable on London, even for the quarter's money arising from the legacy of £1,500 a year, left her by her brother, Colonel James Stanhope, which still held good. Notwithstanding these difficulties, no disposition was manifested by her to curtail a single expense. There were still thirty-three or thirty-four servants." *

This for the sake of her rank! But she reduced the necessities of life to a minimum. Meryon described the

* "Memoirs," vol. iii., pp. 44-8.

afflicting sight of beholding her wrapped up in old blankets, her room lighted by yellow beeswax candles in brass candlesticks, drinking tea out of a broken-spouted blue teapot and a cracked white cup and saucer, in a room not so well furnished as a servant's bedroom in England.*

Sir Francis Burdett's answer, when it came, was disappointing in the extreme; there was no legacy, nothing to hope for from any quarter.

She had waited months in suspense, and the disappointment was acute. She wrote to Sir Francis Burdett on July 20th, 1838:

"I am no fool, neither are you; but you might pass for one if in good earnest you did not understand my letter. You tell me what is self-evident—that I have no right to inherit Colonel Needham's property, etc. Neither has your daughter any right to inherit Mr. Coutts's property; but, in all probability, his wife, being aware that you and your family stood high in his estimation, paid that compliment to his memory. Lord Kilmorey, who had no children, being aware of General Needham's partiality towards Mr. Pitt, might, by his will, have allowed the property to return to the remaining branch of the Pitt family. Do not be afraid that I am going to give you any fresh trouble about the affair, notwithstanding I believe that you were some time hatching this stupid answer; but I do not owe you any grudge, as I know that it does not come from you—I know where it comes from.

"A lion of the desert, being caught in the huntsman's net, called in vain to the beasts of the field to assist him, and received from them about as shuffling an answer as I have received from you, and previously from Lord Hardwicke. A little field mouse gnawed the master-knot and called to the lion to make a great effort, which burst the noose, and out came the lion stronger than ever.

"I am now building up every avenue to my premises, and there shall wait with patience, immured within the walls, till

* "Memoirs," vol. iii., p. 92.

it please God to send me a little mouse; and whoever presumes to force my retirement, by scaling my walls or anything of the like, will be received by me as Lord Camelford * would have received them." †

When this letter was written Dr. Meryon was making final preparations for his departure. Before he left, the walling up of the entrance to Djoun had begun. Lady Hester drew out on paper the exact manner in which it was to be proceeded with. A screen completely masked the gateway and left an opening large enough for a cow or ass laden with water to enter. The work took two days to complete.

Shut away from the outer world, deprived of her income, left in solitude by her friends, and in a precarious state of health, Lady Hester fought bravely to the end. She thought that she would still live to see her enemies confounded, her debts paid, the second coming of Christ, and her complete triumph over earthly difficulties.‡ She was still sustained by her belief in the hidden mysteries which had been revealed to her. "I shall not die in my bed," was one of her last remarks to Meryon. It was a terrible thing that, though she had but few months to live, fate had been cruel. Had the suspension of her income been delayed, had Meryon remained with her a short while longer, her end might have been less tragic.

As it was she died in bitterness and loneliness.

Her last letter to Meryon contained a friendly thought for him. "Do not keep reproaching yourself about leaving me; it did not depend on you to stay;§ also, do not put

* Thomas Pitt, first Baron Camelford (1737-1793). Lady Hester admired Lord Camelford immensely. She said of him he "was a true Pitt, and, like me, his blood fired at a fraud or a bad action." See "Memoirs," vol. I., pp. 321-5.

† "Memoirs," vol. iii., pp. 307-9.

‡ See "Memoirs," vol. iii., pp. 320-1.

§ She refused to have him near her when she thought she was dying.

308 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

into your head that you have the seeds of the malady you named to me. . . . I hope to hear that you are better. I have written a sad, stupid letter, but I have no news—shut up.” *

A month later she died, on June 23rd, 1839, without a European in her presence. She had no medical attendant, no one to nurse her but a black servant. All that is known of her last moments was told by Mr. Moore and the missionary, Mr. Thomson.

“Mr. Moore, our consul at Beirut,” wrote Eliot Warburton, “hearing Lady Hester was ill, rode over the mountains, accompanied by Mr. Thomson, the American missionary, to visit her. It was evening when they arrived, and a profound silence was over all the palace; no one met them; they lighted their own lamps in the outer court, and passed unquestioned through court and gallery, until they came to where *she* lay. A corpse was the only inhabitant of the palace, and the isolation from her kind which she had sought so long was indeed complete. That morning thirty-seven servants had watched every motion of her eye: but its spell once darkened by death, everyone fled with such plunder as they could secure. A little girl whom she had adopted and maintained for years took her watch † and some papers, on which she set particular value. Neither the child nor the property was ever seen again. Not a single thing was left in the room where she lay dead, except the ornaments upon her person: no one had ventured to touch these, and even in death she seemed able to protect herself. At midnight her countryman and the missionary carried her out by torchlight to a spot in the garden that had been formerly her favourite resort, and there they buried her.” ‡

“It was an intensely hot Sabbath in June, 1839,” wrote Thomson, describing his melancholy errand; “the consul decided

* “Memoirs,” vol. iii., p. 340.

† She had no watch and very few possessions of any value. She was supposed to have been plundered because so little was found in the house.

‡ Eliot Warburton’s “the Crescent and The Cross,” vol. ii., pp. 94-5. (Colburn, 1845.)

Her Funeral

309

that the funeral must take place immediately. This vault in the garden was hastily opened, and the bones of General Lousteneau, or of his son, I forget which—a Frenchman who died here, and was buried in the vault by her Ladyship—were taken out and placed at the head. —

“The body, in a plain deal box, was carried by her servants to the grave, followed by a mixed company, with torches and lanterns, to enable them to thread their way through the winding alleys of the garden. I took a wrong path, and wandered some time in the mazes of these labyrinths. When at length I entered the harbour, the first thing I saw were the bones of the general, in a ghastly heap, with the head on top, having a lighted taper stuck in either eye-socket—a hideous, grinning spectacle. It was difficult to proceed with the service under circumstances so novel and bewildering. The consul subsequently remarked that there were some curious coincidences between this and the burial of Sir John Moore, her Ladyship’s early love. In silence, on the lone mountain at midnight, our lanterns dimly burning, with the flag of her country over her, ‘she lay like a warrior taking his rest’; and we left her ‘alone in her glory.’ There was but one of her own nation present, and his name was *Moore*. . . .

“The morning after the funeral the consul and I went round the premises and examined *thirty-five* rooms, which had been sealed up by the vice-consul of Sidon to prevent robbery. They were full of trash. One had forty or fifty oil-jars of French manufacture, old and dusty. Another was crammed with Arab saddles, moth-eaten, tattered and torn. They had belonged to her mounted guard. Superannuated pipe-stems without bowls filled one room. Two more were devoted to medicines, and another to books and papers, mostly in boxes and ancient chests. Nothing of much value was found anywhere. . . . What a death! Without a European attendant—without a friend, male or female—alone, on the top of this bleak mountain, her lamp of life grew dimmer and more dim, until it went quite out in hopeless, rayless night. . . .

“I should like to read the long, dark, interior life of such a being, but not to live it. Alas! she must have drained to the dregs many a bitter cup. Her sturdy spirit here fought out all

alone a thousand desperate battles, and lost them all. Let those who are tempted to revolt against society, and war with nature, God, and man, come to Djoun—sit on the fragments of this broken tomb, amid ruins without beauty to charm or age to make venerable—itsself a ruin of yesterday and sinking fast to hopeless oblivion! Will such an end pay for such a life? But enough of Lady Hester. Poor wandering star, struck from the bright galaxy of England's happy daughters to fall and expire on this solitary summit of Lebanon! I drop a tear upon thy lonely grave, which, living, thy proud spirit would have scorned." *

* W. M. Thomson's "The Land and the Book," pp. 79-81. (Nelson, 1859.)

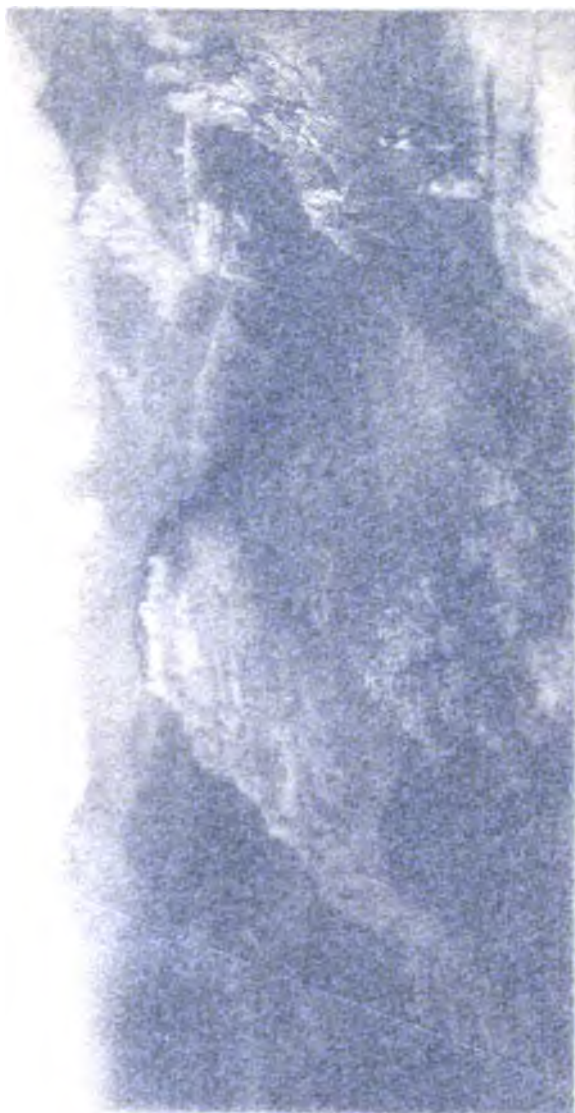


Figure 1. A large rock fragment.

Madly Hester Lucy Stanhope

... my father, and I lost them all. Let them
... against society, and war with nature.
... Down — on the fragments of ...
... with its beauty to charm or a ...
... of yesterday and sinking fast to
... end pay for such a life? ...
... wandering star, struck from the
... daughters to fall and expire
... I drop a tear upon thy
... thy proud spirit won't ...

• "The ... of the Book," pp. 73-81. (New ...)



A VIEW OF DJOUN, LADY HESTER'S HOME ON MOUNT LEBANON.

CHAPTER XXXIV

CONCLUSION

LADY HESTER had made her will in 1807,* leaving all her possessions to her half-brothers, Charles and James Stanhope. On April 27th, 1809, after the death of Charles, she added a codicil, giving everything to James, with the exception of a legacy of £500 to her maid, Elizabeth Williams, and a pearl locket containing some of Pitt's hair to the Duchess of Richmond.

On December 30th of the same year she added a second codicil, appointing Paul Anderson and Alexander Murray to be her executors, and making the former her residuary legatee in case her brother James predeceased her. No other member of the family was mentioned in the will.

A further codicil was added on December 11th, 1819, leaving to Miss Williams the sum of 2,400 francs for her journey to England, and her Arabian horses to a merchant at Beirut. The will was not proved until 1844. Colonel Anderson, who was the only surviving legatee, renounced probate, and Lady Hester's effects† were divided for the benefit of her creditors.

No sooner was Lady Hester in her grave than her friends, relatives and biographers tried to draw a moral from her sad story. Dr. Meryon, whose position may have excused him from being obsequious in her lifetime, took the first

* See Appendix A.

† Some of them appear in Appendix C.

312 **Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope**

opportunity of judging her from the standpoint of an equal. "An important lesson may be gleaned from her life," he wrote in the "Memoirs." "That she was more unhappy in her solitude than, in her unbending nature, she would stoop to avow, this diary of the last years of her existence but too plainly demonstrates. Although she derived consolation in retirement from the retrospect of the part she had played in her prosperity, yet her mind was embittered by some undefined but acute sense of past errors; and although her buoyant spirits usually bore her up against the weight by which she was oppressed, still there were moments of poignant grief when all efforts at resistance were vain, and her very soul groaned within her. She was ambitious, and her ambition had been foiled; she loved irresponsible command, but the time had come when those over whom she ruled defied her; she was dictatorial and exacting, but she had lost the talisman of that influence which alone makes people tolerate control, when it interferes with the freedom of thought and action. She had neglected to secure wealth while she had it in her power; but the feelings which prompted her princely munificence were as warm as ever now that the means were gone which enabled her to gratify them. Her mind was in a perpetual struggle between delusive schemes and incompetent resources. She incurred debts, and she was doomed to feel the degradation consequent on them. She entertained visionary projects of aggrandisement, and was met by the derision of the world. She spurned the conventional rules of that society in which she had been bred, and perhaps violated propriety in the realisation of a singularity in which she gloried. *There* was the rock on which she was finally wrecked. . . ."

He omitted to point out her compensations. She had seen life. She had found triumph, love and power. She

* "Memoirs," vol. iii., pp. 344-5.

Conclusion

313

had tasted freedom. For these things she paid full value, because it was not in her nature to suffer stoically; but she forgot to ponder over what would have awaited her if she had not seized her destiny with both hands. She would probably have grown old in colourless and soured spinsterhood, having just missed everything she desired—political power, riches and position. In Syria, at least, she secured a few years of crowded happiness, a certain celebrity and a name that lived beyond her day.

APPENDIX A

LADY HESTER STANHOPE'S WILL

**Extracted from the Principal Registry of the Probate,
Divorce and Admiralty Division of the High Court
of Justice. In the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.**

**THIS IS THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT of me
Lady HESTER LUCY STANHOPE of Montagu Square in
the parish of Saint Marylebone in the county of Middlesex
spinster made the twenty eighth day of September in the year
of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seven (that is to
say) I give and devise all that one third part of a moiety or
one sixth part of the entirety of and in the freehold heredita-
ments and estates of my late grandfather William Earl of
Chatham deceased of which I am seised or entitled unto under
his last will as one of the three daughters and co-heiresses at
Law of my late mother Hester Viscountess Mahon deceased in
remainder upon the decease of my uncle John Earl of Chatham
without issue male And all my estate right title and interest
whatsoever under or by virtue of the said will unto and to the
use of my dear brothers Charles Banks Stanhope and James
Hamilton Stanhope if they should both survive me in equal
moieties as tenants in common their heirs executors adminis-
trators and assigns but if either of my said brothers should die
in my lifetime I give and devise all the said hereditaments and
premises unto and to the use of the survivor of them his heirs
executors administrators and assigns And I do also give and
bequeath unto them my said brothers if they should both survive
me equally to be divided between them their executors adminis-
trators and assigns And if either of my said brothers should die**

Appendix A

315

in my lifetime then unto the survivor of them his executors administrators and assigns All and singular my goods chattles rights and credits and personal estate whatsoever subject to the payment of my debts funeral expenses and the charges incident to this my will and of any legacies I may give by any codicil hereto And I do appoint them the said Charles Banks Stanhope and James Hamilton Stanhope to be EXECUTORS or the survivor of them to be executor of this my will IN WITNESS whereof I have hereunto set my hand and have also executed or intend to execute a duplicate hereof in like manner the day and year first above written—HESTER LUCY STANHOPE—Signed published and declared by the said Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope the testatrix as and for her last will and testament in the presence of us who at her request in her presence and in the presence of each other have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses—W SIDNEY SMITH—THOS HOBBS SCOTT—ALEX MURRAY.

Montague Square April the 27th 1809

I BEG THAT MY BROTHER James Hamilton Stanhope to whom I bequeath the whole of my property to pay the sum of five hundred pounds to Elizabeth Williams my maid as a reward for her faithful services I also request my brother James to give to my kind friend the Duchess of Richmond a pearl locket with Mr. Pitt's hair.

P.S. to my last will dated 28th Sept 1807 of which Mr Murray has a duplicate—HESTER LUCY STANHOPE.

THIS IS A CODICIL to be added to the last will of me Lady HESTER LUCY STANHOPE dated the twenty eighth day of September one thousand eight hundred and seven Whereas I have in and by my said will given and devised (in the event which has happened of the death of my late brother Charles Banks Stanhope in the lifetime of my brother James Hamilton Stanhope) all my real and personal estates unto and to the use of my said brother James Hamilton Stanhope his heirs executors administrators and assigns absolutely And

316 **Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope**

whereas I have made no provision in my said will for the event which may possibly happen of the death of my said brother James Hamilton Stanhope in my lifetime And whereas he and myself are about to take a voyage to Sicily in the same ship and shall probably return to England together consequently we may both be lost in the course of our voyage either out or home in which case it may be uncertain whether he survived me or not against both which events I am desirous of providing and supplying by this my codicil Now my will further is in case my said brother James Hamilton Stanhope not being lost at sea shall happen to depart this life in my lifetime or in case it should so happen that he and myself should both be lost in our said intended voyage whether the fact be or be not ascertained in the event last mentioned of my death before him Then and in either of the said events only and not otherwise I do hereby give and devise all my one third part of a moiety or one sixth part of the entirety of and in the freehold hereditaments and estates of my late grandfather William Earl of Chatham deceased of which I am seised or intitled unto as one of the three daughters and co-heiresses at Law of my late mother Hester Viscountess Mahon deceased in remainder upon the decease of my uncle John Earl of Chatham without issue male And all my estate right title and interest whatsoever under or by virtue of the same will unto and to the use of Paul Anderson Lieutenant Colonel of His Majesty's Sixtieth Regiment of Foot his heirs executors administrators and assigns And I do also give and bequeath unto him the said Paul Anderson his executors administrators and assigns all my goods chattels rights credits and personal estate whatsoever subject to the payment of my debts funeral expences and the charges incident to the proving and executing this my will and of all such legacies as I may give by any codicil or codicils And I do appoint the said Paul Anderson and Alexander Murray of Symonds Inn in the county of Middlesex Gentleman to be EXECUTORS of my will But I do hereby further expressly declare my will and intention to be that if my said brother shall survive me not having been lost in the same ship with me so as not to leave any doubt whether he did survive me or not That and in that case I do hereby ratify and confirm my said will in all respects it being my intention not to alter or

Appendix A

317

disturb my said will if my said brother shall live to derive the benefit of it IN WITNESS whereof I have hereunto set my hand the thirtieth day of December one thousand eight hundred and nine and have executed or intend to execute a duplicate hereof in like manner HESTER LUCY STANHOPE—Signed published and declared by the Right Honourable Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope as and for a codicil to her last will in the presence of us who at her request in her presence and in the presence of each other do hereunto subscribe our names as witnesses—J RICE 21 Sury Square Kent Road—JOSEPH FOX Argyll Street—Wm ALLEN Plough Court Lombard Street London.

Translated from the French.

IN THE PRESENCE of Messrs Loustaunau father and son and of Miss Wonillams (*sic*) I have ordered that all my papers manuscripts and Arabic books shall be burnt My intention is that neither Miss Williams nor any other person in my service shall be in any way rendered accountable or molested for this act I further declare that of my own free will I make a donation of all my horses and mares to Seide Abdalrahamal Berbir Merchant at Bierout in such manner that no person whatsoever shall have the power of making any claim on him against this donation It is further my intention that all the articles or properties and effects which I possess in this country shall be sold by public sale or auction under the superintendence and inspection of the Oher-Omar of the Town of Seide and of a Christian named Sovera an inhabitant of Harhericour near Gonne from the proceeds of this sale there shall be given to Miss Wonillams the sum of two thousand four hundred francs for her journey to England where she will settle her account with my brother The surplus of the sale should any remain shall be handed over to Mr Loustaunau I declare that it is not my desire either to add to or diminish from these my present dispositions for which reason I have closed this present writing by affixing thereunto my signature approving the said writing and the contents thereof in the presence of the witnesses hereinafter named who have signed jointly with myself vizt Pierre

318 **Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope**

Loustaunau late General in the Service of the King of Sindia in India Jean Baptiste Loustaunau Captain Adjutant Major of the ex Imperial French Guard and Elisabeth Wonillams fille de Chambre Abra on the 11th day of the month of December in the year 1819 (Signed) **HESTER LUCY STANHOPE—**
(Signed) **LOUSTAUNAU** fils (son) **LOUSTAUNAU** pere (father)—**ELIZABETH WILLIAMS.**

Faithfully translated from the French hereunto annexed in London the twenty sixth day of December one thousand eight hundred and forty two —Wm Scorer Not Pub (L.S.)

In the Goods of The Right Honorable Hester Lucy Stanhope
spinster decd.

APPEARED PERSONALLY The Right Honorable Griselda Tekell commonly called Lady Griselda Tekell (wife of John Tekell Esquire) of Frimley Park near Bagshot in the county of Surry and Charles Ward of No 59 Strand in the County of Middlesex Gentleman and made oath as follows And first the said Lady Griselda Tekell for herself made oath that she is the sister of the Right Honorable Hester Lucy Stanhope commonly called Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope formerly of Montagu Square in the County of Middlesex but late of D'joun in Syria spinster deceased And the said Charles Ward for himself made oath that he knew and was well acquainted with the said deceased for many years previous and to the time of her death And the deponents jointly made oath that they know and are well acquainted with the manner and character of handwriting and subscription of the said deceased the deponent Lady Griselda Tekell having often seen her write and also subscribe her name and the deponent Charles Ward having as Clerk in the house of Messrs Coutts and Company of the Strand Bankers (with whom the said deceased kept a cash account) during thirty five years seen and inspected the checks or drafts drawn and signed by the said deceased on the said firm and which he well knows to have been paid by them And the deponents having attentively viewed and perused the papers writing now hereunto annexed and purport-

Appendix A

319

ing to be and contain the first and third codicils to the last will and testament of the said deceased the said first codicil beginning thus "Montague Square April the 27th 1809" ending thus P S to my last will dated 28th Sept 1807 of which Mr Murray has a duplicate and thus subscribed "Hester Lucy Stanhope" and the said third codicil being written in the French Language and beginning thus "en presence de Messieurs Loustaunau pere et fils" ending thus "Abra ce 11^e jour du mois de Decembre de l'annee 1819" and thus subscribed "Hester Lucy Stanhope" They the deponents further made oath that they do verily and in their consciences believe the whole series or contents of the said first codicil beginning and ending as aforesaid and the subscription thereto and to the said third Codicil to be of the proper handwriting of the said deceased Griselda Tekell On the third day of October one thousand eight hundred and forty four the said Lady Griselda Tekell was only sworn to the truth of this Affidavit by virtue of the Commission hereto annexed before me G E Hollest Commissioner — Chas Ward On the 19th day of September 1844 the said Charles Ward was duly sworn to the truth of this Affidavit before me A F Bayford Sur Pt Edward F Jenner Not Pub.

Administration (with 3 Codicils) granted
12th October 1844.

fos 25.

C.H.P.

786—'44

APPENDIX B

THE PROBATE ACT TO LADY HESTER'S WILL

Extracted from the Principal Registry of the Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division of the High Court of Justice. In the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.

WILLIAM BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE Archbishop of Canterbury Primate of all England and Metropolitan to our well beloved in Christ Moise Haym Picciotto Daniel d'Illel Picciotto and John Phileas Mongredieu Greeting Whereas it hath been alleged before the Worshipful Herbert Jenner Doctor of Laws Surrogate of The Right Honorable Sir Herbert Jenner First Knight Doctor of Laws Master Keeper or Commissary of our Prerogative Court of Canterbury lawfully constituted on the part and behalf of the said Moise Haym Picciotto Daniel d'Illel Picciotto John Phileas Mongredieu That The Right Honorable Hester Lady Stanhope commonly called Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope formerly of Montague Square in the county of Middlesex but late of D'joun in Syria spinster deceased (having whilst living and at the time of her death goods chattels or credits in divers dioceses or jurisdictions) made and executed her last will and testament and three codicils thereto in writing and in her said will named her brothers Charles Banks Stanhope Esquire since deceased and James Hamilton Stanhope Esquire Executors and in the second codicil after reciting the death of the said Charles Banks Stanhope (in the event of the death of her brother James Hamilton Stanhope) substituted Paul Anderson and Alexander Murray executors and also named the said Paul Anderson residuary legatee And whereas it was further alleged that the said James Hamilton Stanhope and Alexander Murray respectively died in the lifetime of the said deceased and

the said Paul Anderson hath heretofore renounced as well the Probate and execution of the said Will and Codicils as also Letters of Administration with the same annexed of all and singular the goods chattels and credits of the said deceased (as by the Acts and Records of our said Court appears) And whereas it was further alleged that Signors Alessandro Laurello representing the House of Laurello and Brothers I Chausseaud Hadgi Khabil El Berbir Hadgi Mahouim El Berbir Constant Roquerbe for the House of Ct Roquerbe and Company George Dromocarli Guiseppe Segur Jacob Abello Michell Airut Nicola Medawar Antonio Nassar Hanna Doniani Ibraim and Raffael Domani di Deir El Kama Creditors of the said deceased have in and by a certain Act of Cession and transfer duly made and recorded in the Chancery of the Consulate of Her Britannic Majesty at Beirout in Syria bearing date the fourteenth day of October in the year one thousand eight hundred and forty one for the considerations therein mentioned ceded transferred and assigned all their interest in their respective claims and demands on the estate of the said deceased to the House of Trade acting under the style or firm of Michell Kababe and Sons Jacob Abello and Antoon Misk of Bierout aforesaid Merchants (as in and by an authentic copy of the said Cession or Transfer in the Italian language with a Notarial Translation thereof heretofore brought into and now remaining in the Registry of our said Court appears) And whereas it was further alleged that Francesco Fantozzi representing the firm of Messieurs Gio and Fo F F Fantozzi of Alexandria in Egypt Merchants also Creditors of the said deceased have in and by a certain Act of Cession transfer or assignment duly made and recorded in the Chancery of the Consulate of Her Britannic Majesty at Alexandria bearing date the twenty second day of the month of October aforesaid for the considerations therein mentioned ceded transferred and assigned to the said Messieurs Michel Kababe and Sons Jacob Abello and Antoon Misk all their right claim and demand on the estate of the said deceased (as in and by an authentic copy of the said Act of Cession or transfer in the Italian language with a Notarial Translation thereof heretofore brought into and left in the Registry of our said Court appears) And whereas it was further alleged that on the thirty first of December one thousand eight

322 **Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope**

hundred and forty two Letters of Administration of all and singular the goods chattels and credits of the said deceased were decreed to be granted and committed to Paul Cababe the younger one of the Assignees of the creditors aforesaid and a requisition issued as usual security but that he hath since declined to take upon himself personally the said Letters of Administration And whereas it was further alleged that there are no creditors of the said deceased in England (as in and by an Affidavit duly made and sworn to by the said Moise Haym Picciotto and others and brought into and now remaining in the Registry of our said Court appears) And whereas it was further alleged that the said Moise Haym Picciotto Daniel d'Illel Picciotto and John Phileas Mongredieu are the only Partners and Persons trading under the Firm of Messieurs Picciotto Mongredieu and Company of London Merchants and as such are the lawfully constituted Attornies of the said Messieurs Michel Kababe and Sons Jacob Abello and Antoon Misk the assignees of the Creditors and heirs of creditors in Beirout and Alexandria aforesaid of the said deceased and who are now respectively residing at Bierout aforesaid (as in and by an authentic copy from the Register of the British Consul Office with a Notarial Translation of the subscriptions thereto from the Arabic into English produced and shewn to the said Surrogate and left in the Registry of our said Court also appears) And whereas the Surrogate aforesaid having duly considered the premises did at the petition of the Proctor of the said Moise Haym Picciotto Daniel d'Illel Picciotto and John Phileas Mongredieu rescind the said Decree so far as the granting of administration to the said Paul Cababe and Decree Letters of Administration with the said will and codicils annexed of all and singular the goods chattels and credits of the said deceased to be granted and committed to the said Moise Haym Picciotto Daniel d'Illel Picciotto and John Phileas Mongredieu for the use and benefit of the said Messieurs Michael Kababe and Sons Jacob Abello and Antoon Misk and until they shall duly apply for and obtain Letters of Administration with the said will and three codicils annexed of the goods of the said deceased to be granted to them on their giving sufficient security (Justice so requiring) And we being desirous that the said goods chattels and credits may be well and faithfully administered applied and

disposed of according to Law do therefore by these presents grant full power and authority to you in whose fidelity we confide to administer and faithfully dispose of the said goods chattels and credits according to the tenor and effect of the said Will and Codicils and first to pay the debts of the said deceased which she did owe at the time of her death and afterwards the legacies contained and specified in the said Will and Codicils so far as such goods chattels and credits will thereto extend and the Law requires you having been already sworn to wit you the said Moise Haym Picciotto and John Phileas Mongredien before the Surrogate aforesaid and you the said Daniel d'Illel Picciotto by Commission well and faithfully to administer the same and to make a true and perfect Inventory of all and singular the said goods chattels and credits and to exhibit the same into the Registry of our said Prerogative Court of Canterbury on or before the last day of April next ensuing and also to render a just and true account thereof And we do by these presents ordain depute and constitute you administrators with the said Will and Codicils annexed of all and singular the goods chattels and credits of the said deceased for the use and benefit of the said Messieurs Michel Kababe and Sons Jacob Abello and Antoon Misk and until they shall duly apply for and obtain Letters of Administration with the said will and codicils annexed of the Goods of the said deceased to be granted to them Given at London the twelfth day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty four and in the seventeenth year of our Translation.

Effects under £2,000 within
the Province of Canterbury.

fos 21
C.H.P.

APPENDIX C

THE following is a list of trunks, boxes and effects left by Lady Hester in the charge of her brother, Colonel James Stanhope, when she left England. (The list was made out by Miss Williams, as I suppose, or else by Rice.) *

No. I

Leather Trunk marked E. W. contents Wm. Pitt's State gown of Black Silk with Gold lace: the lace tarnished: the silk in good condition.

No. II

A dispatch Bag with a Brass Plate without a name: locked, never opened—left untouched but with a card attached directed Countess of Liverpool.

No. III

Leather Trunk with brass plate marked Honble. C. Stanhope
25th. foot. (Contents)
Black Portfolio containing blank paper, petition &c.
5 Parchmt. covd. books mathematical. Lady Griselda &
Lady H.
1 red covd. book army manuscript C. Stanhope.
Sketchbook.
Red Morocco book: Poetry in manuscript.
Marble covd. book, blank.
Marble covd. visiting book.

* From Dr. Meryon's MSS.

Appendix C

325

- 1 small oval box contg. silver toy teatable—several papers of black beads. Silver toy looking glass, chandeliers &c.
- 1 pair jet earrings set in gold. Large black bombs necklace with cross and locket with hair. In all 12 bracelets and necklaces of jet. Large quantity of loose beads. 3 crosses in all. Some yards of blk trimmings & tassels in 2 lots. The black small beads some loose and three papers besides. Also 2 more necklaces.
- 1 pair black spurs.
- 1 stirrup (Lady's).
- 8 glass intaglios (one Jupiter & Leda). 7 black stones.
- 15 gilt basket buttons.
- 5 glass inkstands.
- 1 red leather powder puff.
- 1 chip box small, containing, 1 bottle oil of turpentine 1 bottle red ink—1 beautiful ivory model of a wheel cannon presented to Wm. Pitt by Littzman.
- 1 white oakbox with lid 1 ft $\frac{1}{2}$ long by 1 foot wide containing—2 instrument cases with no instruments—3 glove swivels—1 bundle camel's hair pencils—1 bundle black lead pencils—1 pill box with cut card—1 paper rough red coral—1 blue porcelain pen tray—1 doz. sham pearl ear drops—28 Italian glass intaglios, models of the antique—1 miniature on ivory, King Fred:—1 locket in gilt copper with hair—Marble draft men—1 box chalks—2 sticks Indian ink—1 bottle medicine proby. Laud:—1 paper black chalk—1 round rule—Three Dutch China pipe bowls—7 paint saucers—2 purse sliders—12 links of pearl beads large as very small marbles—a paper of coloured glass beads—a paper of pearl buttons and of beads (imitations)—2 wooden pill boxes with gold-cold. dust and beads (rubbish)—1 seal impression—1 set of Masquerade beads, large and of different colours.

No. IV

Paper covd. Trunk—contents—in a paper ware box.

- 1. A steel girdle clasp.
A tortoise shell snuff box—round.

- Copper plate, Major Stanhope's card.
 2 more tortoise shell snuff boxes—round.
 five dogs collars, 2 brass & 3 steel, in good preservation.
 1 Lapis Lazuli snuff box in pieces.
 Square pieces of agate and other stones.
 3 broken snuff boxes of stone.
2. In a tunbridge ware box
 - 1 dutch pipe bowl.
 - 1 pair scissors.
 - 2 crayon holders steel.
 - 14 blacklead pencils.
 - 1 brush for painting.
 - 1 snuffbox rim brass.
 3. 1 black leather blotting book.
 4. 1 pair Canadian morgassons or shoes.
 5. 1 blank drawing book.
 6. 1 piece parchment.
 7. 1 marble covd. blank drawing book.
 8. 1 blank portfolio—*containing lease of Mr. Pitt's cottage*,
coloured paper and drawing paper &c.
 9. 1 blue very small box of paper—with tooth brushes,
button hook, tooth picks, &c.
 10. 1 drawing book (Countess of Harrington's) with pretty
sketches.
 11. 4 china pens (great curiosities).
 12. $\frac{1}{2}$ quire paper.
 13. 1 calf skin commonplace book almost blank.
 14. 1 very small blank sketch book.
 15. 1 pen case.
 16. $\frac{1}{4}$ hundred quills.
 17. 1 marble paint stand.
 18. 1 glass intaglio.
 19. 1 girth.
 20. 1 pair boothooks, ivory handle.
 21. 1 ivory pallet.
 22. 1 brass mounted boot jack.
 23. 1 pipe bowl—écume de mer.
 24. 1 pack visiting cards—L. H. S.
 25. 1 small red morocco pistol horn.

No. V

A black trunk $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet long by $1\frac{1}{2}$ wide. (Brass plate torn off) with brass nails, and iron corners.

Contents.

1. Tonbridge ware paint box, with 2 fine pieces Indian ink with colours complete.
2. 3 black ebony Inkstands and glasses to the same.
3. 1 marble paint thing.
4. 1 mahogany paint box—large; with many brushes large and small, but paints incomplete: drawer underneath incomplete.

No. VI

A blackleather Imperial—Contents.

1. A Lady's courthoop.
2. a robe of white Chinese Crape in good condition.
3. a scrap of printed cotton.
4. pieces of black patent net.
5. scraps of black silk and crape.
6. a black crape body trimmed with bugles.
7. A few yards of coarse white muslin.
8. a hair net.
9. a bit of maroon muslin.
10. a Genoese cap (woman's).
11. a white habit waistcoat.
12. pieces of black gauze and calico.
13. a light blue Genoa cap.
14. 3 bundles of scraps.
15. small pieces of white crape.
16. a gold cap—of what country unknown.
17. a black velvet cap, very old.
18. pieces of printed cotton.
19. bits of slate coloured velvet.
20. a black poplin petticoat.
21. Bits of poplin—scraps of silk.
22. a sleeve white.
23. about 2 yds. figured silk, black.

Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

24. a pink slip frock of your Ladyship's when a child.
25. a black muslin petticoat.
26. pieces of old black velvet.
27. a satin pincushion embroidered.
28. a grey jean gown.
29. some yards of black crape with silver stars (Masquerade?).
30. a small blue striped cotton gown.
31. a tarnished silver girdle.
32. a piece of white calico stuff (supposed by me to be an Otaheite stuff).
33. a worked muslin child's frock of your Ladyship's.
34. a handsome blk crape dress trimmed with bugles and tassels.
35. a small piece of black lino.
36. 2 pieces of black silk, one striped one plain.
37. Three coloured cotton gowns.
38. 1 black gauze dress.
39. scrap of black Lino.
40. a round towel—a sheet to pack the whole.

No. VII

A deal box, marked "Plated Articles L. H. Stanhope."

1. Four plated dishes with heaters, with irons for do.
2. Three pair of tall plated candlesticks, one of the nozzles broken.
3. do — — do — — short do — —
4. two do — branches — — —

No. VIII

A smaller deal box, containing China.

1. a French Paper Box containing a nest of seven tumblers with gilt edges.
2. 2 Roman urns, very tiny—2 do cups—1 do lamp.
3. 2 Gibraltar spar egg cups.
4. a set of French porcelain (marked with butterfly)—consisting of 1 sugar basin & 2 slop basins.

Appendix C

329

5. A set of Pencilled French Porcelain (white ground with an Indian-ink flower) consisting of 18 saucers, 12 tea cups, 6 coffee cups, 1 cream pot, 1 sugar basin, 1 slop basin, 1 bread and butter plate, 1 teapot.
6. one diversified set, consisting of 8 saucers (one broken), two cups, and 6 coffee cups (the whole Gold & colours, very rich)

No. IX.—a deal box marked, on a card,
Lady H. Stanhope—Mrs. Fry—No. 26.
opened, but not examined.

(Linen) No. X. (marked, on a card, L. H.
A deal box, with brass keyhole. Stanhope)
Contents.

1. Bed hangings & furniture in cold. cotton—
2. 1 Calico cover for a bed—
3. Five Kitchen Round Towels—
4. Four pair of servants' sheets—
5. 19 Glass cloths—
6. 6 Dish cloths.
7. Three Fine sheets.
8. Seven Table cloths—
9. Six Pair Pillow Cases—
10. Two white counterpanes—
11. Twelve Doileys.

No. XI. (Empty)
A small black leather Trunk with a brass plate inscribed with
your Ladyship's name, your own.

No. XII. (Empty)
A little old brown leather trunk belonging to Miss Williams.

No. XVII
Also a red trunk containing trinkets sealed up.

330 Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope

No. XVIII

Also the bureau, sealed up.

No. XIX

**Also Lamp, vases, bronze chandelier given by the Princess of
W. : put up in his room—**

No. XX

Also Antinous (statuette)

No. XXI

Also Shepherd Boy a picture (put up in his room)

No. XIII

Empress of Russia, a print, at Rice's.

No. XIV

**Seizure of the Golden Fleece by Jason, Water colour painting,
at Rice's.**

No. XV

Miniature Portrait of Duchess Dowager of Rutland. (At Rice's).

No. XVI

A Landscape in water colours—at Rice's.

INDEX

- Abbott, Mr., Lady Hester's opinion of, 244, 247
- Abercrombie, Mr. Speaker, Lady Hester's letter to, 297
- Abra, Dr. Meryon living at, 181
- Achmet Bey, Bankes calls upon, 223
- Adair, Mr., afterwards Sir Robert, visits Malta, 76; Lady Hester's opinion of, 116
- Adams, W. D., quoted, 31-2, 47*n*.; Lady Hester corresponds with, 50
- Adhémar, Comte d', effect of, on the young Lady Hester, 12
- Adrianople, Bruce goes to, 103
- Aleppo, Bruce leaves for, 132; Bruce leaves, 140; again there, 153; Lousteneau prophesies the earthquake at, 242-3
- Alexandria, Lady Hester sets out for, 123; leaves, 124; Meryon's description of, 126; Meryon at, 205
- Anderson, General Paul, Sir John Moore's bosom friend, 57*n*.; Lady Hester recommends him to Sutton, 66; appointed Lady Hester's executor and residuary legatee, 66*n*., 68, 311, 316
- Ansarie Mountains, Colonel Boutin murdered on the, 206
- Antioch, Lady Hester goes to, 231
- Ascalon, Treasure-seeking at, 184; account of visit to, 196, 198
- Asmar, Maria Theresa, her account of Lady Hester's riding, 253
- Aspasia, Lady Hester compared to, 83
- Astrology, Lady Hester and, 241, 250, 285, 271-3
- Athens, Lady Hester, Bruce and party at, 91-5; suggested return to, 120
- Austerlitz, battle of, Pitt's reference to, 52
- Baalbec, Bruce visits, 140; Lady Hester's journey to, 193, 194, 196
- Bankes, William John, arrives at Mar Elias, 211 *and note*; Lady Hester's letter of recommendation, 212; unsuccessful attempt to engage Meryon, 212-8; Lady Hester's annoyance with him, 216; Meryon's letter to, 217; leaves Mar Elias, 218; disregards Lady Hester's advice, 223; and is taken for a quack doctor, 224; on Lady Hester's occultism, 242
- Banks, Sir Joseph, Lady Hester friendly with, 225
- Barker, John, dissuades Lady Hester from going to Palmyra, 141-3; seals up her papers during her illness, 169; his family attended by Dr. Meryon, 172; letter from Lady Hester, 190; manages Lady Hester's business affairs at Aleppo, 192; thinks her crazy, 242; she foretells to him the Aleppo earthquake, 243; Lady Hester's opinion of him, 245
- Barrie, Captain, friend of Lord Camelford, 115; his ship, the *Pomane*, wrecked, 123
- "Bastinado" letter, the, 244; Madden's account of the affair, 247-8
- Bathing, the manner of Turkish women, 101

- Bathurst, Earl, Lady Hester's letter to, about Ascalon, 198a.
- Bavaria, Maximilian, Duke of, his suite dosed by Lady Hester, 289
- Beaudin, Lady Hester's dragoman, 186, 189, 215
- Bebec, Lady Hester at, 103, 104, 109, 110; Canning at, 111
- Bed, Lady Hester's, 259, 283
- Bedouins, their skill in stripping an enemy, 167
- Beirut, plague at, 163; its disappearance, 169; tour through, 194; Buckingham at, 221; Lady Hester's death foretold at, 246; Meryon and family at, 277; the village infected, 283
- Belle Poule*, Capt. Brisbane's frigate, 85; Lady Hester sails from Malta in, 89
- Bells, strange story concerning, 277-9
- Bentinck, Lord William, Lady Hester's opinion of, 99
- Bertrand, M. Louis, a dragoman, 177
- Beahyr, Emir, Prince of the Druses, gives Lady Hester a horse, 136; 137; his kindness to Lady Hester, 138, 146; a message from her Ladyship, 178; cools towards Lady Hester, 184; a story of, 240; opposition to Lady Hester, 251; admiration of her, 264; Lady Hester alights him, 289; he flees to Egypt, 290
- Beahyr, Sheik, Governor of the Mountain, 137
- Bey, Abdin, his presents to Lady Hester and Bruce, 127
- Binning, Lord, 21a; 22, 23, 29
- Bisra, Lady Hester at, 188
- Boigne, Comtesse de, quoted, 17-18
- Botany, Lady Hester's interest in, 226
- Boutés, unable to see Lady Hester, 274
- Boutin, Colonel, murder of, 206, 207, 208, 221, 228
- Bowring, Dr., refused an interview with Lady Hester, 271, 274; his views on her sanity, 274
- Brandenburg-Baireuth, Margravine of, 23
- Bridges, Sir Harford Jones, *see* JONES
- Brothers, Richard, his prophecy concerning Lady Hester 129, 144, 241
- Broughton, Lord, *see* HOBHOUSE
- Bruce, Michael Crawford, Lady Hester's love for, 56; meets Lady Hester at Gibraltar, 73; his family, 73, 90; birth, 73; friendship with Lady Hester, disparity in age, escorts Lady Hester to Malta, 74; meets Sir Robert Adair, 76; stays with Lady Hester at St. Antonio, 77; flirtation with Lady Hester, 78; ill-feeling of Dr. Meryon against, 78, 82, 84, 86, 87; his extravagance, 84, 85; takes the lead of Lady Hester's expedition, 87, 90; his retinue, 89; his family, 90; with Lady Hester at Athens, 91; his opinion of Lady Hester, 93; *en route* for Constantinople, 95; tours with Lord Sligo, 96; his love for Lady Hester, 101; General Oakes on, 102; leaves Bebec for Adrianople, 103; question of marriage with Lady Hester, 104, 105; his character, 106, 166-7; gives Dr. Meryon a pelisse, 107; with Lady Hester at Brusa, 109; shipwrecked with Lady Hester, 121; in Egypt, 125; buys Turkish dress, 126; receives presents, 127; buys a horse, 130; goes to Aleppo, 132, 135; quarrels with Dr. Meryon, 133, 134; taken ill at Aleppo, 140; arrives at Damascus, 141; anxious about Lady Hester, 142; annoys Lady Hester, 143; his health, 144; his curious letter to General Oakes, 150-1; at Aleppo, 153; *en route* for Palmyra, 155; grows a beard, 161; his health, 162; at Latakia, 164; receives news of his father's ill-health, 167; leaves Lady Hester, 167, 168, 169, 171, 179, 182; returns to England, 173; Lady Hester's liaison with, 174; his trial in Paris, 175, 226; his marriage, 175; his son, 175a; his death, 175a; his present to General Oakes, 204

Index

333

- Bruce, Patrick Crauford, Lady Hester's** letter to, 104; his illness, 171; death, 173; Lady Hester's thoughtfulness for, 174
- Brummell, Beau, and Lady Hester,** 55
- Brusa, 98; Lady Hester and party at,** 109
- Buckingham, James Silk, travels with Bankes,** 211; Lady Hester's letter of credit on behalf of, 218; dedicates his book to Lady Hester, 219; his description of Lady Hester, 220; leaves Mar Elias, 221; Lady Hester's letters to, 222-7
- Buckingham, Marquis (afterwards Duke of), Lady Hester's letter to,** 228
- Builth, Lady Hester at,** 62; Nassau Sutton invited to, 65
- Bulak, Lady Hester at,** 225
- Buonaparte, Louis,** 114
- Buonaparte, Napoleon, see NAPOLEON**
- Burckhardt, John Lewis ("Sheik Ibrahim"), met by Meryon,** 205; Lady Hester's opinion of, 205n.; curious stories of, 209n.
- Burdett, Sir Francis, assists Mahon to escape,** 21; applied to by Lady Hester on the question of her legacy, 295, 305, 306
- Burfield, Pitt's gardener,** 49
- Burton Pynsent, Lady Hester at,** 18, 19; she cannot return there, 30
- Burton, Sir Richard, his view of Lady Hester as a prophetess,** 270-1
- Bury, Lady Charlotte, "Monk" Lewis's letter to,** 105; her note on Bruce, 106; letter from Princess of Wales to, 173; her opinion of Bruce, 175
- Bussle, Ali,** 160
- Bute, Lord, at Malta,** 76, 81, 133
- Byron, Lord, on the *Salsette*, 85n.; Lady Hester's first glimpses of, 93; their opinions of each other, 94, 95; mimicked by Lady Hester, 270**
- Cairo, Lady Hester and party at,** 125
Meryon's description of, 126
departure from, 127; adventures of Burckhardt at, 208-9 *and note*
- "Califourchon, the Chevalier,"** quoted, 147
- Camden, Lord, inspects French gun-boat,** 35
- Carnelford, Lord, 115, 291n.; 307, and note**
- Camp near Jerusalem, Lady Hester's,** 128
- Campbell, Colonel Patrick, his letter to Lady Hester,** 275, 291n., 292, 298, 300
- Canning, the Rt. Hon. George, 47n.; Lady Hester quarrels with,** 60
- Canning, Stratford, his remark on Lady Hester's upbringing,** 7; his kind treatment of her, 97; his optimism, 99; Lady Hester's opinion of him, 100, 116-17; her quarrel with him, 110-12; her anger with him, 113; she complains of him to Wellington, 116-17; sends him a copy of her letter to Wellington, 119, *and note*; reconciliation, 120; she writes to him, 164, 176; referred to, 242
- Caradoc, Hon. John, 243**
- Carne, John, Lady Hester refuses to receive him,** 254; his story of Miss Williams's lover, 255
- Caroline, Princess of Wales, a dreaded dinner with,** 25; her letter to Lady Charlotte Bury, 173; her tent, 197; avoided by Lady Hester, 231
- Castle Jeba, 233**
- Castlereagh, Lord, Lady Hester's opinion of,** 41; calls on Pitt, 42
- Catafago, M., letter from,** 166; letter from Lady Hester to, 178
- Cats, Lady Hester's fondness of,** 259
- Caulaincourt, Madame de St. Aignan, a friend of Bruce,** 175
- Cave, discovery of curious, near Palmyra,** 161
- Cerberus, the, Lady Hester sails from Gibraltar in,** 74

- Charles X., Lady Hester meets him, 44
- Chasseaud, Lady Hester's secretary, 258
- Chatham, John Pitt, 2nd Earl of, 30, 36; Lady Hester not on good terms with him, 55
- Chatham, Lady, 18, 19, 30, 36
- Chatham, William Pitt, 1st Earl of, Lady Hester reveres his memory, 19, 229; Lady Hester's resemblance to, 268; she glories in her descent from him, 301
- Chevening, 18, 19, 20, 22, 30
- Christian religion, the, Lady Hester repudiates, 242; her opinion of it, 243
- "Circe of the Desert, the," Lady Hester so called, 266
- Clarendon, Lady, chaperons Lady Hester, 16
- Clarke, Mary Anne, 60a.
- Cleveland, Duchess of, her "Life of Lady Hester" referred to, 3, 4, 47a., 69, 174
- Cline, H., jun., introduces Dr. Meryon to Lady Hester, 71
- Colborne, Major (afterwards Lord Seaton), 57a.
- Constantinople, suggested journey to 80; Bruce and Lord Sligo visit, 95; rumour concerning Lady Hester and Bruce at, 105
- Consuls, Lady Hester's hatred of, 245 and note
- Corinth, Lady Hester and party set out for, 89
- Cotton, Charles, 80
- Coutts and Co., Messrs., Lady Hester's bankers, 191, 216, 232, 290, 318
- Coutts, Mr., notices resemblance between Lady Hester and Pitt, 268a., 306
- Crash, Mr., 67
- Cumberland, Duke of, attracted to Lady Hester, 17
- Cyprus, Dr. Meryon at, 231; Lady Hester suggests he settles at, 281
- Dallas, Sir George, Bruce marries his daughter, 175
- Dallegio, Georgio, Lady Hester writes to him, 188; dismissed from her service, 199; he threatens suicide 200; she relents and sends him to England, 201-5; Meryon's account of, 203a.; his return, 231
- Damascus, Lady Hester and party at, 133; Lady Hester's entry, 135; she settles at, 136; Bruce at, 141; fighting near, 146; Lady Hester leaves for Hamah, 153; Silk Buckingham at, 218; Bankes at, 223-4; Mrs. Meryon refuses to permit the Doctor to accompany Lady Hester thither, 261
- Damietta, Lady Hester and party at, 127, 128; Meryon at, 206
- Dayr el Kamar, description of, 132
- Dayr, Lion of the Desert, son-in-law to Mahannah el Fadel, suggestion that he was Lady Hester's lover, 288
- Delibaches, the, 138, 139, 141, 144
- Dernon, Louis, 226
- Devils, Lady Hester claims power over, 272
- Didot, Firmin, visits Lady Hester, 57, 231
- Ditton, Lieut.-Colonel, 38, 39
- Djoun, Lady Hester's arrival at, 239; its surroundings, 249; description of, 249, 250; attempts to break into, 251; receptions at, 264; Lady Hester unwilling that the Meryons should live at, 281; her life at, 283; the walling-up of, 307; the funeral at, 309
- Doctor, Lady Hester plays the, 289
- Dress, Lady Hester's taste in, 54a., 79; her admiration of Albanian, 100; she adopts masculine attire, 113, 250; she finally adopts Turkish dress, 122; its great expense, 123a., 126; description of, 129, 251-2, 258-9, 275; Kinglake's account of, 268-9
- , Meryon's, 124
- , scanty, of the Palmyrene women 158

- Drummond, Miss, 39
- Druses, their tenets and customs, 131, 137; insurrection of the, 274; Lady Hester said to have adopted their religion, 242
- Dumfries, Lord, 133, 137
- Dundas, General Sir David, 36, 139*n.*, 204
- Earthquake, predicted by Lousteneau, 242-3; curious superstition concerning, 245
- Eastern lover, question of Lady Hester's, 56, 151, 288, 289
- Ebrington, Lord, at Malta, 76; professionally treated by Dr. Meryon, 79; present from Lady Hester to, 127; letter from Lady Hester to, 298
- Edgeworth, Miss, Lady Hester reads her "Absentee," 209
- Egerton, Mrs., Lady Hester travels with, 28, 29
- Elias, the Abyssinian, 201
- Eliot, Harriet, 19, 30
- Ellenborough, Lord, at Lord Sligo's trial, 91
- Elvin, Rev. Charles R. S., quoted, 48
- Elvira, Lady Hester compared to, 83
- England, Lady Hester's reasons for leaving, 116; her hatred of, 174, 175, 229, 245, 253, 300, 301, 303
- English statesmen, Lady Hester's contempt for, 116, 228
- "Eothen" quoted, 268-70
- Ephca, Fountain, curious wedding ceremony at, 158
- Evil eye, the, 271
- Farquhar, Sir Walter, Pitt's doctor, 50, 52
- Fatalism, a factor in Lady Hester's creed, 253, 271
- Fatûm, Lady Hester's maid, 258
- Fawkes, the Rev. Francis, his lines on the marriage of Lady Hester's parents, 5
- Fazackerly, Mr., message from Lady Hester to, 101; chaffs her about her destiny, 241
- Férial, Baroness de, prophecy concerning, 241, 276*n.*
- Fernandez, Mr., Commissary-General at Malta, 75; Lady Hester gives his wife a dress, 79
- Flowers, Lady Hester's love of, 260
- Forbes, Sir Charles, 226
- Forster, Captain, Lady Hester writes to, 188
- Foster, Vesey, 298
- Fox, Caroline, and Sir John Moore, 57 *and note*; her "Journals" quoted, 271
- Fox, Rt. Hon. Charles James, 296; his offer to secure Lady Hester a grant from Parliament, 298
- Fry, Mrs. Anne, Lady Hester's maid, 172, 185; Lady Hester's antipathy for her, 187; her care for Mrs. Fry's health, 188, 215, 219
- Gally Knight chaffs Lady Hester on her destiny, 241
- Garnett, Dr. Richard, tells Lady Hester's character by the stars, 281
- Genealogical Table, xvi.
- George III., 79
- Georgio, *see* DALLBGIO
- Gibraltar, Lady Hester at, 30, 73-4
- Gillray's caricature of Lord Stanhope, 10
- Glastonbury, Lord, 24, 238
- Glen Irfon, Lady Hester's stay at, 63-7
- Gontaut, Duchesse de, quoted, 16
- Gordon, Duchess of, 17
- Governesses, Lady Hester's dislike of, 11, 148
- Graham, General, 98, 103, 190
- Granville, Lord Granville Leveson-Gower, 1st Earl, Lady Hester in love with, 46; his appointments, 47*n.*, 56, 57, 68
- Greatness, Lady Hester's ideas of, 145, 282
- Grenville, General Richard, 233 *and note*; Lady Hester's letters to, 233-7

- Grenville, Henry, 6
 Grenville, Lord, Lady Hester unfriendly towards, 55
 Grenville, Louisa, afterwards Lady Stanhope, 6, 10, 11
 Gronow, his "Reminiscences" quoted, 46
 Guildford, Lord, 48 (*see also* NORTH, FREDERICK)
 Guys, M., French Consul at Beirut, finds a house for the Meryons, 280-2, 292
- Haddington, Charles, 8th Earl of, Lady Hester's correspondence with, 21 *and note*, 22, 25, 28, 29, 35
 Haddington, Lady, *see* HOPE, SOPHIA
 Hady Achmet, 226
 Hanissa, Convent of, 192
 Hardwicke, Lord, Lady Hester writes to, on the matter of her legacy, 306, 306
 Harem, Laws of the, observed very strictly at Lady Hester's residence, 248
 Harrington, Lord, 44
 Harrowby, Lord, 47*a*.
 Hastings, Lady Hester's youthful adventure at, 12
 Hastings, Warren, Lady Hester at his trial, 13
 Haym, Mâlem, 212
 Heathcote, Lady, 17
 Heathcote, Sir Gilbert, 13; Dr. Meryon accepts a place in his household, 239; Dr. Meryon leaves, 257
 Hely-Hutchinson, Captain John, and the affair of Lavalette's escape, 175, 228
 Hertford, Lord, 13
 Hervey, Lady, 6
 Hester, Lady, *see* STANHOPE, LADY
 HESTER LUOY
 Hobhouse, John Cam, Lord Broughton, his opinion of Lady Hester, 76; travels with Byron, 85*a*., 93, 94; quoted, 271
- Holland, Lord, 296
 Hornsey, Lady Hester's creditor, 291; 293
 Hope, Captain Henry, 123, 124
 Hope, Lady Sophia (afterwards Lady Haddington), 21*a*., 28, 29
 Horsemanship, Lady Hester's, 14, 129 *and note*, 147, 253; Meryon's, 109
 Horses, Lady Hester's wondrous, 252, 267, 276; her love for horses, 141, 219, 259; their high price in Syria, 160, 225
 Hutchinson, Captain, *see* HELY-HUTCHINSON
 Hutchinson, Lord, 84, 101
- Ibrahim Pacha invades Syria, 263; Lady Hester independent of, 274
 "Ibrahim, Sheik," *see* BURCKHARDT, JOHN LEWIS
 Irby, Hon. Charles Leonard, unsuccessful application for interview with Lady Hester, 233
 Irfon, Glen, *see* GLEN IRFON
- Jackson, Francis James, letters from Lady Hester to, 27, 29, 32, 33, 37, 47*a*.; his account of Lady Hester, 60
 Jaffa, Lady Hester at, 128, 198-201
 Jason, Lady Hester sets sail in the, 72
 Javell, Mr., 246
 Jekyll, Mr., amusing story of, 92
 Jerusalem, Lady Hester at, 128; prophecy that Lady Hester should be Queen of, 129, 241; Princess of Wales travelling to, 231
 Jones, Betsey, 62
 Jones Bridges, Sir Harford, 114 *and note*
 Joyce, Jeremiah, 20 *and note*
- Keukri, the procession of Lady Hester's party to, 90
 Kilmorey, Lord, 305, 306
 Kimel Bey, 224
 Kinglake, Alexander William, visits Lady Hester, 267-70; "Eothen"

- quoted, 268-70; takes Dr. Meryon for her, 268; his description of her appearance, 268; she reminds him of Lord Chatham, 268; is overwhelmed by Lady Hester's occult science, 269; calls her a "wondrous white woman," 269; does not see the mares, 270; considers Lady Hester perfectly sane, 270
- Lila**, Lady Hester's famous Arab mare, 252 *and note*, 276. *See also* HORSES
- Lamartine**, Alphonse Marie Louis, Lady Hester's opinion of, 94a.; his letter to Lady Hester, 263; visits her, 263-7; discussion about his foot, 266; points his toe in Lady Hester's face, 266; calls Lady Hester "Circe of the Desert," 266; sees the mares, 267; considers Lady Hester sane, 267; his opinion of her appearance, 267; she mimics him, 270; the effect of his book, 276
- Latakia**, 151, 163, 164, 165, 167, 169, 213 216
- Lavalette** affair, the, 175 *and note*, 222, 226
- Lavater**, 237
- Lebanon**, *see* MOUNT LEBANON
- Leu**, Duchesse de St., a friend of Bruce, 175
- Leveson-Gower**, *see* GRANVILLE
- Lewis**, "Monk," and the rumours concerning Lady Hester and Bruce, 105
- Liston**, Mr. (afterwards Sir Robert), Ambassador at Constantinople, 100, 110; his arrival, 114; 193; and the hidden treasure expedition, 198; 206
- Liverpool**, Lord, amusing stories of, 41-3
- Longchamp**, Mademoiselle, 280
- Loquacity**, Lady Hester's extraordinary, 260
- Lousteneau**, General, a prophet in Lady Hester's household, 241; his prediction of the Aleppo earthquake, 242-3; referred to as "soon to be the Messiah," 275; disinterment of, 309; mentioned in a codicil of Lady Hester's will, 317
- Ludolph**, Count, 113
- Lulu**, the grey mare, 252 *and note*. *See also* HORSES
- Macdonald**, Captain (Kinnear), 171
- Madden**, R. R., his account of the bastinado story, 247-8; visits Lady Hester, 249; her reception of him, 250; description of Lady Hester's habits by, 251; his interest in Lady Hester's Arab mares, 252; Lady Hester tells him the events of her life, 253; his pleasure in Lady Hester's society, 254
- Magic**, *see* ASTROLOGY, OCCULTISM, PROPHECY
- Mahannah el Fadel**, chief of the Anizi, 139; guarantees Lady Hester's safety, 140; she goes with him into the desert, 143; he entertains Meryon, 144, 149; the danger of going with him, 145; mentioned by Bruce, 150; entertains Lady Hester in the desert, 155
- Mahomet Ali**, attempts to coerce Lady Hester, 295
- Mahon**, *see* STANHOPE, CHARLES, 3RD EARL; *and* STANHOPE, PHILIP HENRY, 4TH EARL
- Maitland**, General, Lady Hester's account of, 99
- Malta**, Lady Hester and suite at, 74-89; Lord Sligo goes to, 96, 100; Lady Hester thinks of returning there, 165; Miss Williams at, 170
- Maltass**, Mr., English consul at Alexandria, 121, 124
- Mangles**, James, his unsuccessful attempt to see Lady Hester in Syria, 233
- Manutz**, Mr., 121
- Mar Elias**, Lady Hester settles at, 177-81; description of, 177; Georgio leaves, 203; departure of

- Meryon, 205; Lady Hester leaves temporarily, 206; visitors at, 211, 218; Buckingham's account of, 219-20; Col. Boutin at, 223; Chas. Irby and Jas. Mangles at, 233; Lady Hester gives up residence there, 239; Lousteneau at, 242; Miss Williams's love affair at, 255; the bells at, 278; Meryon and family stay there, 280-1
- Mares, Lady Hester's, *see* HOMES; LAILA; LULU
- Mariam, the Abyssinian, 201 *and note*
- Marie-Louise, Empress, 74a.
- Marmora, tremendous storm off, 95
- Marriage, rumours of Lady Hester's, reach F. J. Jackson, 27; Lady Hester's feelings towards, 43; to Leveson-Gower, 46, 56, 57; to a Bedouin or Wahabee chief, 56, 288-9; to Sir John Moore, 56; to Bruce, 84, 101, 130; to Ebn Secod, 151; to Lousteneau, the French "Messiah," 275
- Martin, Admiral, 90
- Masoud, Agar, 145
- Massad, Miss Williams's lover, 255-6
- Massena's retreat, Lady Hester on, 99
- Maubourg, M. La Tour, Lady Hester plots with, 111, 114, 116-7
- Mehmet, Ali, reviews his troops before Lady Hester, 127
- Melville, Lord, 50, 51, 53, 190
- Meryon, Dr. Charles Lewis, Lady Hester's physician, accompanies her on her travels, 1; letter to his parents asking them to treat his communications about Lady Hester as private, 2; taken to task for publishing "Memoirs" of Lady Hester, 3; her reminiscient conversations reported by him, 8, 14, 37a., 48, 67 *et seq.*; becomes acquainted with Lady Hester by accident, 71; joins her at Portsmouth, 71; delight at his appointment, 72; describes Lady Hester's life at Gibraltar, 73; discusses the question of Lady Hester's proposed journey to Sicily, 74, 80, 82; describes his apartments at the old Hotel de France, Malta, 75; praises Lady Hester, 75; deploras her dislike of her own sex, 75-6; account of the palace and gardens of St. Antonio, 77; and Bruce, *see below*; present at the King's birthday celebrations, 79; question of his salary discussed, 79; mentions Lady Hester's wish to meet Napoleon, 80-1; discusses Lady Hester's health, 83; compares her to Elvira, Portia, Semiramis, Aspasia, 83; thinks no one equals her in talent but Napoleon, 83; anxious to leave Malta, 84, 85; discusses Lady Hester's expenditure, 85; detests the Turks, 90; describes procession from Corinth to Keukri, 90; and Lord Sligo, 91, 96a.; declares Lady Hester was pleased with Byron, 95; derives benefit from his travels, 108; praises Lady Hester's liberality, 108; declares she was perhaps the most courted society woman in London, 108; prepares a house for Lady Hester at Brusa, 108; his gratitude to her, 109; tames a high-mettled horse, 109; discusses his possible return to England, 110-11; writes of Lady Hester's quarrel with Stratford Canning, 111-12, 119; on Lady Hester's method of packing, 120; mentions the shipwreck at Rhodes, 121; goes to Smyrna to obtain supplies, 123; describes Lady Hester's Turkish robes, 123a., 126; arrested by mistake on his way to Rosetta, 124-5; describes Lady Hester's pursuit of health, 125-6; gives an account of her encampment in the mountains near Jerusalem, 128; writes of Lady Hester's accident, 130; his description of Sayda, 131; of the Druses, 131; of a visit to Emir Beshyr, 131; dismissed by Lady Hester, 133; she changes her mind about dis-

Meryon, Dr. C. L. (contd.)

missing him, 135; entry into Damascus, 135; sent to Palmyra, 144; on Lady Hester's Eastern ways, 147; writes Lord Sligo about her triumphal entry into Palmyra, 151-62; at Latakia, 165; letter from Catafago to, 166; letter to Lord Sligo telling him that Lady Hester is affected by Bruce's departure, 167-8; letter to Lord Sligo telling him that Lady Hester is at death's door, 168-9; letter to Miss Williams telling her that Lady Hester's life is despaired of, and of Bruce's departure, 170-1; letter to Bruce telling him of Lady Hester's recovery, 171; prostrated by fever, 172; describes Mar Elias, 180-1; regrets time lost to his profession, 182; mentions great change in Lady Hester's character, 182-3; advises her to remove to Meshmushy, 184; his diary, endorsed "Lady Hester's journey to Meshmushy in which she is mad," 184-8; Lady Hester abuses him, 186; his conciliatory letter to her, 187; writes to Beaudin at her instruction, 188-9; letter from Barker to, about Lady Hester's business affairs, 192-3; tours from place to place with Lady Hester, 194; vows he will not leave her unattended, 195; describes the treasure-hunt at Ascalon, 196-8; strains at the loach, 203; writes to England on behalf of Georgio Dallegio, 203a.; makes a trip to Alexandria, 205; meets Burckhardt, 205; letters from Colonel Missett to, 205-6, 208-9; reads "The Absentee" to Lady Hester, 209; deeply touched by Lady Hester's loneliness, 210; Mr. Bankes offers to take him as secretary, 213; letter from Bankes proposing this scheme, 214-5; Lady Hester expresses her resentment about the scheme to, and offers to let him go, 215-6; letter refusing Bankes's suggestion, 217-8; letter from Silk Bucking-

ham to, 221; mentions the departure of Bankes and Buckingham, 221; his patience exhausted, 230; he leaves the East, 231-2; extract from his diary in England, 238; pays a second visit to the East, but soon leaves again, 239, 248; takes an appointment with Sir Gilbert Heathcote for five years, 239; letters from Lady Hester to, 239, 257, 274, 275, 277; 281-2; his third visit to Lady Hester, 257, 274; his marriage, 257; sets sail from Leghorn, but has to return, 257; concerned to hear of Miss Williams's death, 257; starts for the East in 1830, 258; welcomed by Lady Hester, 258; curious details of the "Memoirs," 258-61; counts Lady Hester's cats, 259; hears about her debts, 261, 290; Lady Hester receives his wife, 261; offers to take his wife to Europe, 261; leaves Syria, 262-3; discusses Lady Hester's belief in magic and astrology, 271-3; Lady Hester appeals to him for help, 274; his sympathy, 275; his fourth and last visit accompanied by his family, 277; Lady Hester refuses to see his wife, 277; recounts the story of the bells, 277-80; at Mar Elias, 280; suffers from a wounded leg, 280; requests Lady Hester to let him have a cottage at Djoun, 281; her refusal, 281-2; his departure for Cyprus suggested, 282; Lady Hester begs him to burn her letters, 283; collects material for the "Memoirs," 283; chats and smokes with Lady Hester day after day, 283; never sees Lady Hester on Wednesdays, 283; describes her versatility, 283-4; Lady Hester's hostile attitude towards, 285; meditates taking his departure, 285, 307; description of Prince Pückler-Muskau, 287; said by Lady Hester to sulk if she abuses him, 289; helps Lady Hester with letters to the Queen, Wellington, etc., 297;

- Meryon, Dr. C. L. (contd.)**
 arranges for their publication, 302;
 describes Lady Hester's financial
 straits, 305-6; Lady Hester's last
 words to, 307; last letter to, 307-8;
 the moral of her life, 312
- Meryon and Bruce, Meryon's ill-feel-
 ing towards him, 78; quarrels
 with him, 82, 86, 130, 133;
 patches up the quarrel, 84, 107;
 anticipates Lady Hester's mar-
 riage with, 84; describes his mode
 of living, 85; his relations with,
 discussed, 86-7; remarks on his
 numerous retinue, 89; resents his
 overbearing attitude, 90; inquires
 about his family, 90; accepts a
 present from, 107; declares him to
 be unpopular, 107; says he has
 a violent character, 130; mentions
 his influence over Lady Hester,
 130; disapproval of, 130-1;
 suffers from his arrogant manner,
 133; can no longer swallow his
 affronts, 133-4; dismissed on
 his account, 133-4; demands
 secrecy as to his disputes with,
 133; sent by Lady Hester to
 attend on, 140; her plan for
 separating him from, 140; an-
 nounces Bruce's departure, 167;
 writes him about Lady Hester's
 health, 171**
- Meryon, Eugenia, 279; Lady Hester's
 letter to, 280-1**
- Meryon, Mrs., afraid of disaster at
 sea, 257; her visit to Lady
 Hester, 261; Lady Hester's "sys-
 tem of hostility" towards, 261;
 Lady Hester refuses to see her,
 277; wishes to leave Mar Elias,
 281; her love of retirement, 282**
- Meshrumshy, Lady Hester stays at,
 184; eventful journey thither,
 185-8; leaves for Baalbec, 193;
 returns, 206**
- Messiah, Lady Hester and the second
 coming of the, 241, 265; a rumour
 that Lady Hester would be the
 bride of, 275**
- Methuen, Paul, 27 and note.**
- Metta, a prophet, 241**
- Military matters, Lady Hester's inter-
 est in, 33, 36, 37a.**
- Missett, Colonel, British resident at
 Alexandria, 124; Lady Hester's
 letters to, 171, 206; she sends
 him books, 210; Meryon attends
 him professionally, 205**
- Missionaries, Lady Hester's opinion
 of, 246; one tries to convert her,
 242**
- Mont Cenis, Lady Hester crosses, 29**
- Montagu Square, Lady Hester takes
 a house in, 55; gives it up, 68**
- Moore, Mr., the Consul at Beirut, 292;
 Lady Hester's letter to, 293; is
 present at her burial, 308**
- Moore, Sir John, Lady Hester's ad-
 miration of, 42; talk of marriage
 with, 56; question of his engage-
 ment to her, 57 and note; his seal,
 57a; his last letter to her, 58-60;
 his last words about her, 60;
 similarity of his and her burial,
 309**
- Morier, Mr., 192**
- Moskowa, Princesse de la, 175**
- Mount Lebanon, Lady Hester's se-
 clusion at, 31; the Druses cf, 137;
 Lady Hester settles at foot of,
 168-70; the monasteries on, 181;
 tour through, 194; prophecy con-
 cerning Baroness de Fériat at, 241**
- Mules, Lady Hester enjoys riding, 29**
- Mulgrave, Lord, 30, 31, 32, 70**
- Murray, Alexander, an executor of
 Lady Hester's will, 311, 316**
- Murray, Colonel, 226**
- Mussi, Christophe, 87a.**
- Napier, Sir William, quoted, 40-43;
 writes to *The Times* on Lady
 Hester's behalf, 303**
- Napoleon I., said to be at Boulogne,
 38; marriage with Marie Louise,
 74a; Lady Hester wishes to
 meet, 60; Lady Hester compared
 to, 83; reputation in England,
 222; Lady Hester's opinion of,
 223; his escape from Elba fore-
 told, 242**

- Nasar, son of Mahannah, escorts Lady Hester to Palmyra, 152-159**
- Needham, Colonel, 306**
- Newbery, Dr., Meryon's successor as Lady Hester's physician, 231; he relinquishes the post, 238; a story of, 260n.**
- North, Frederick (afterwards Lord Guildford), 136, 241**
- Oakes, General Sir Hildebrand, Governor of Malta, 75 and note; offers Lady Hester his country palace, St. Antonio, 76; Lady Hester's letters to, 87, 96-101, 103, 104-5, 113-15, 120-1, 121-2, 136-42, 143-4, 164, 165, 173-4, 204, 231; Lady Hester's friendship for, 87; he learns Lady Hester's news, 101; his sympathetic letter to her, 101-2; she confides in him, 104; hopes to meet him in England, 105; Lady Hester complains to him of Stratford Canning, 113; he hears of her being shipwrecked, 121; letter from Bruce to, 150; Meryon calls on him in England, 238**
- Occultism, 233, 241, 242, 269, 271-3, 283**
- Packing, Lady Hester's method of, 120**
- Painter, Lord Sligo's, 90, 93**
- Palanquin, Lady Hester's, 160, 197**
- Palmerston, Lord, 293; Lady Hester sends him a duplicate of her letter to the Queen, 296; his answer on behalf of the Queen, 299; reproved by Lady Hester, 299; *The Times* on his treatment of Lady Hester, 302; Lady Hester's contempt for, 304**
- Palmyra, preparations for journey to, 136, 141; postponement, 142, 143; Meryon at, 144; prophecy concerning Lady Hester's empire at, 144; more preparations, 145-51; her reasons for the expedition, 148; Meryon's account of the visit, 151-62; description of the ruins, 157, 158; Lady Hester's royal reception, 157; wedding ceremony at, 158; hurried departure from, 159; the cave near, 161; Lady Hester claims to have been crowned at, 163, 164; difficulties and charm of the journey, 163-4; Banks and Buckingham wish to visit, 212**
- Palmyrenes, description of the, 156-7**
- Parker, Marianne, widow of Sir Peter Parker, Bruce marries, 175**
- Patras, visit of Lady Hester to, 89**
- Patriotism, Lady Hester's, 116**
- Pearce, Henry, joins Lady Hester's party, 121; mistakenly arrested in Egypt, 125**
- Pension, Lady Hester's, 53, 275, 292, 295, 298, 302, 305**
- Pera, Lady Hester visits, 95**
- Perini, Lady Hester's maitre d'hotel, 258**
- Physiognomist, Lady Hester as a, 237, 265**
- Pierre, Lady Hester's servant, 186, 187**
- Pisani, Mr., 117, 166, 193**
- Pitt, Lady Hester's pride in the family, 296, 301, 307n.**
- Pitt, Lady Hester, Lady Hester Stanhope's mother, 5; her character, 21-2**
- Pitt, Lucy, 3, 5, 74n.**
- Pitt, Robert, 3, 5**
- Pitt, Thomas ("Diamond Pitt"), 3, 74n., 301**
- Pitt, William, conversations with Lady Hester, 13, 16; pleased at her popularity, 15; chaperons Lady Hester, 18; the idol of his niece, 27; Lady Hester's affection for, 28; his health, 29; welcomes Lady Hester into his household, 30; interests himself in her half-brothers, 30n.; his affection for Lady Hester, 31, 32; his volunteer regiment, 34, 37; equips a fleet of luggers, 34; offers a majority to Captain Nassau Sutton, 38; writes to Lieut.-Col. Ditton, 38-9; re-enters office, 40; at Putney Heath, 40; admiration for Sir John Moore, 42; his ill-**

- health, 42, 50, 51; love of practical fun, 42-3; discusses Lady Hester's marriage, 45; refuses to take her advice, 45a; appreciates her plantation at Walmer, 49; his death, 51-3, 54; his last words of Lady Hester, 53; a look of his hair bequeathed in Lady Hester's will, 315; referred to, 66, 185, 210, 217, 226, 229, 232a, 234, 279, 296, 301, 302
- Plague, the, 162, 169, 222, 253, 270, 282
- Plaisance, Duchesse de, said to have visited Lady Hester, her curious costume, 275
- Pocknell, 170
- Poets, Lady Hester's opinion concerning, 94, 265
- Politics, Lady Hester's interest in, 31, 45, 68, 110, 113, 117
- Pomane, the, wreck of, 123
- Port Mahon, 74 *and note*
- Portia, Lady Hester compared to, 83
- Poujoulat, unable to obtain interview with Lady Hester, 274
- Price, Mrs., Lady Hester's landlady at Glen Irfon, 64
- Price, Rev. Rice, 62, 63
- Price, Thomas, 62
- Prophets and prophecy, 129, 144, 241, 242, 243, 246, 265, 269, 270-1, 276 *and note*
- Pückler-Muskau, Prince, suggests that Lady Hester was wooed by a Bedouin lover, 56; and the Arab marea, 267; visits Lady Hester, 285-9; author and dandy, 285; his appearance, 287, 288; Lady Hester asks him to publish her letter to the Queen, 301
- Pugnacity, Lady Hester's, 185, 187, 245, 258
- Pyrrhic dance, Lady Hester dances, with peasants, 122
- Quack doctor, Bankes taken for a, 224
- Queen, Lady Hester regarded in the East as a, 136, 150, 249, 250, 254; she claims to have been crowned at Palmyra, 163, 164; she fancies herself a, 260a.
- Ramleh, 129
- Reichstadt, Duc de, 241
- Religion, Lady Hester's intention to found a new, 231; her own, 242 *and note*; her opinion of the Christian, 243; her right to choose her own, 245
- Republicanism, Lord Stanhope's, 5, 7, 10, 11a
- Reviews, Lady Hester present at, 36, 127
- Rhodes, Lady Hester shipwrecked off, 121-3; plague at, 222
- Ribbons, Lord Liverpool and the, 41
- Rice, Mr., 23, 170
- Richmond, Duchess of, mentioned in Lady Hester's will, 311, 315, 316
- Rosebery, Lord, quoted, 1a, 3
- Rosetta, Lady Hester and party at, 224; Meryon's graphic description of, 226
- Rota Club, the, Bruce a member of, 175a
- Royalty, and Lady Hester, 14, 15; her opinion of, 245; her advice to, 293
- Rutland, Duchess of, a present from, 97
- St. Antonio, Valetta, Lady Hester, Bruce and party at, 77, 78
- Salomon, Mâlem, letter from Lady Hester to, 218
- Salsette, Byron and Hobhouse aboard the, 85a; Lady Hester travels on, 123
- Salt, Henry, British Consul-General in Egypt, 209; 222 *and note*; his approval of Lady Hester's procedure, 223; letter from, 233
- Sayda (Sidon), arrival of Lady Hester and party at, 131; Meryon's description of, 132; plague at, 162; Lady Hester's death foretold at, 246
- Schutz, Mr., 206, 208

- Scott, Sir William (afterwards Baron Stowell), 91-2
- Scott, William, letter from Lady Hester to, 24-5
- Semiramis, Lady Hester compared to, 83
- Seood, Ebn, suggestion that Lady Hester might marry him, 151
- Servants, Lady Hester's treatment of, 19, 147-8, 185, 187, 188, 244, 258, 269; they desert her, 308
- Shawls, as worn by the Druses, 226-7
- "Sheik Ibrahim," *see* BUBOKHARDT, JOHN LEWIS
- Sheridan, Thomas, 76
- Shipwreck of Lady Hester and party, 121-2; of the *Pomane*, 123
- Sidon, *see* SAYDA
- Sligo, Dowager Lady, 91
- Sligo, the Marquis of, joins Lady Hester at Gibraltar, 73; his extravagance, 85; at Patras, 89; his entourage, 90; his Albanians, 90, 100; the affair of his brig, 91, 97, 115; accosts Byron, 93; goes to Constantinople, 95; goes for tour with Bruce, 96 *and note*; Lady Hester sends a message by him to General Oakes, 98; he acquaints General Oakes of the state of affairs between Bruce and Lady Hester, 101; his sympathy with Lady Hester, 103; his present to Lady Hester, 122; Meryon's letters to, 157-62, 167, 168
- Smith, Catherine Lucy, Mahon's bride, 35
- Smith, Newman, letter from Meryon to, 108
- Smith, Robert, 1st Baron Carrington, 35
- Smith, Sir Sidney, 191
- Smoking, Lady Hester's incessant, 283
- Solyman Pacha, his present to Lady Hester, 129
- Speaker, the, Lady Hester's letter to, 297
- Spencer, Captain, 190
- Stafford, Lady, 46
- Stafford, Marquis of, 46
- Stanhope, Charles, 3rd Earl Stanhope (earlier Lord Mahon), 5; birth, 6; genius, 6; appearance, 6; Walpole's story of him, 7; his versatility, 7; his Republican views, 7; fond of Lady Hester, 9; Gilray's caricature, 10; effaces armorial bearings, 11a; wishes to break the entail, 20; upset at his son's flight, 21; Lady Hester cannot live with, 30; his death, 232a
- Stanhope, Hon. Charles Banks, 20, 24, 35, 40; fun with Pitt, 42; Lady Hester intends to keep house for him, 55; goes to Spain with Sir John Moore, 58, 59; killed at the battle of Corunna, 60; his legacy to Lady Hester, 232; mentioned in Lady Hester's will, 311, 314, 315
- Stanhope, Lady Griselda (afterwards Tekell), birth, 6; character and marriage, 9; swears to her sister's handwriting in Lady Hester's will, 318, 319
- Stanhope, Lady Grizel, Lady Hester's grandmother, 28 *and note*
- Stanhope, Lady Hester Lucy, her eccentricity, 1; imposes silence on Dr. Meryon, 1; her reserve, 2; reasons for her self-imposed exile discussed, 2; the Duchess of Cleveland's biography of, 3; her descent, 3, 5; her trenchant tongue, 4; birth, 6; baptism, 6; early upbringing, 6; conduct towards her father, 7; tends turkeys, 8; personal magnetism, 8; her memory, 8; her anecdotes, 8; describes her sisters, 9; her father's interest in, 9; objects to her father's Republican views, 10; warfare against her governesses, 11; proud of her appearance, 11, 54-5; tries to cross the Channel in an open boat, 12; expert horsewoman, 14, 253; noticed by royalty, 14-15; her wilfulness, 15-16; at a masked garden-party, 16; described by

Stanhope, Lady Hester (*contd.*)

the Comtesse de Boigne, 17-18; lives at Burton Pynsent, 18-19; descriptions of Chevening, 18-19; leaves Chevening, 20; helps Lord Mahon to leave Chevening, 21-3, 24, 26, 27; letters to the Earl of Haddington, 21, 22, 28, 29, 35-6; letter from Lord Mahon to, 22-3; her judgment of character, 23; rumours of her marriage, 27; love of flirtation, 27, 55, 78; affection for Pitt, 27, 28, 31; letters to Jackson, 27, 29, 32, 33-4, 37; plans a tour abroad, 28; at Walmer, 28, 29, 32, 35, 47; her anxiety about Pitt's health, 29, 34, 47, 50; accompanies the Egertons abroad, 29; returns to England, 30; joins Pitt's household, 30, 31; her wit, 31; anecdotes about Lord Mulgrave, 32; her feline playfulness, 32; enjoys military occupations, 33; describes naval manoeuvres, 35; present at reviews, 36; and the Berkshire militia, 37*n.*; at York Place, 39; appearance described by William Napier, 41; Lord Liverpool and the ribbons, 41 *and note*; and Sir John Moore, 42, 56, 57 *and note*, 58-60; her tomboyish games, 42-3; question of her marriage, 43, 45; her self-confidence, 45; a disappointment, in love, 46; letters to Adams, 47, 50-1; plants trees at Walmer, 48-9; letter to Pitt, 49; grief at Pitt's death; 51-3; Pitt's last words to, 53; her pension, 53; refuses to sit for her portrait, 54; taste in dress, 54*n.*; and Beau Brummell, 55; at Montagu Square, 55; her friends, 55-6; and Bruce, *see below*; question of a Bedouin lover, 56; and Lord Granville Leveson-Gower, 56, 57; and Jackson, 60; quarrels with Canning, 60; interest in the Duke of York, 60; visits Wales, 62-5, 66, 67; at Glen Irfon, 63-4; and Nassau Sutton, 65-70; leaves Montagu Square, 67, 68; decides to

go abroad, 68, 69, 70, 71; makes a codicil to her will, 68, 315; sets sail from England, 72; at Gibraltar, 73-4; first meeting with Michael Bruce, 73 (*see also below*); her health, 73, 75, 81, 83, 125-6, 168-71, 176, 182, 184, 274; accepts Bruce as her escort, 74; at Malta, 74-87; stays with the Fernandezes, 75; Dr. Meryon's praise of, 75; contempt for her own sex, 75; and John Gam Hobhouse, 76; at St. Antonio, 77; her preference for Bruce's society, 78; gives Mrs. Fernandez a dress, 79; her treatment of Dr. Meryon, 79, plans to go to Sicily, 80; says farewell to General Oakes, 87; letters to General Oakes, 87, 96, 97, 98, 99, 104-5, 113-15, 120-2, 136-42, 143-4, 165, 173-4, 204, 231; sails on the *Belle Poule*, 89; her retinue, 89; at Patras, 89; at Corinth, 90; at Athens, 91; and Lord Byron, 93-5; at Therapia, 95, 96; sends an important message to General Oakes, 98; Michael Bruce offers her marriage; 101; General Oakes's letter to her, 101-103; receives an angry letter from her brother James, 103, 109-10; writes to Bruce's father, 104; her agitation, 104; letter from "Monk" Lewis mentioning Lady Hester's *liaison* with Bruce, 105-6; overestimates Bruce's character, 106; Dr. Meryon's account of his life with her, 108; at Brusa, 109; at Bebec, 109; her interest in politics, 110; contemplates dismissing Meryon, 110; wishes to obtain a passage into France, 111; and Mr. Maubourg, 111; quarrels with Stratford Canning, 111, 112, 113-4, 116, 120; her political secrets, 113; her letter to Lord Wellington, 113, 116-8; puts on men's clothes, 113; sends a bridle to General Oakes, 114-5; concerned about the General's health, 115; reasons for leaving England, 116; shipwreck at Rhodes, 121-2; she dances the

Stanhope, Lady Hester (contd.)

Pyrrhic dance with peasants, 122; dresses in Turkish clothes, 122-3; takes her passage to Alexandria on the *Salsetta*, 123, 124; at Cairo, 125; her expensive costume, 126; arrives at Jaffa, 128; at Jerusalem, 128; pilgrimage through Palestine, 129; Brothers's prophecy that she should be Queen of Jerusalem, 129, 241; rides astride, 129, 129a., 147; leaves Acre for Nazareth, 130; visits Emir Beshyr, 131-2; at Dayr el Kamar, 132; entry into Damascus, 132, 135; taken for a beardless youth, 129 and note, 135; journey to Palmyra discussed, 140, 143, 144; called "the daughter of the King of England," 149; question of her marriage with the chief of the Wahabees, 151; her triumphant reception at Palmyra, 151, 157-9, 163; at Latakia, 164-5; unrest, 166; unhappiness, 167; seriously ill, 168-71, 176, 182; at Sayda, 177; her residence at Mar Elias, 177-81; becomes Oriental, 183; at Meshmushy, 184-9, 206, 217; grumbles about her bath, 184; her bad temper, 185-6; abuses Dr. Meryon, 186; Dr. Meryon's letter to make up the dispute, 187; beats her servants, 187, 258; a pathetic glimpse of, 188; her care for her servants, 188; and Anne Fry, 188; her brother's success in Holland, 190; grief at the death of Lady Lucy Taylor, 190, 191; her business affairs, 192; and Barker, 192-3; expedition to Baalbec, 193-4; her mules and asses accounts, 193-4; the treasure-hunt, 196-8; travels in a palanquin, 197; communicates with Sir Robert Liston, 198; finds a statue and causes it to be broken up, 198; at Jaffa, 198; declares she is resigned to her fate, 198; complains about Georgio Dallegio, 199-201; letter to Lord Valentia, 201-3; sends tiger skins to General Oakes, 204; and

Burokhardt, 205; troubled by the death of Boutin, 206-8, 209; her restlessness, 209; reads Miss Edgeworth's "The Absentee," 209-10; her loneliness, 210; her projected trip to Europe, 210; Banks visits her at Mar Elias, 211; Elizabeth Williams joins her, 211; gives Banks letters of recommendation to Mâlem Haym, 212; her dislike of Banks, 212; letter from Banks to, 212-14; resents Banks's attempt to engage Dr. Meryon as his secretary, 215; her letter to Meryon about Banks's proposal, 215-17; gives Silk Buckingham a letter of credit, 218; receives him cordially, 219; he dedicates his book to her, 219; her domestic establishment, 219; her habits, 220; Buckingham's description of her appearance, 220; her letters to Silk Buckingham, 222-6; her letter to the Marquis of Buckingham, 228; refuses to live in Europe, 229; she avoids meeting the Princess of Wales, 231; goes to Antioch, 231; receives Firmin Didot, 231; Dr. Meryon leaves her, 232; lives in seclusion, 232; hears of her father's death, 232; accuses her brother, the new earl, of ingratitude, 232; writes to her brother James, 232; her pecuniary affairs, 232-3; refuses to receive Irby and Mangles, 233; at Castle Jeba, 233; letters to General Grenville, 233-7; ceases communication with her family in England, 233, 238; reliable information about her scarce after Dr. Meryon's departure in 1817, 238; writes to Dr. Meryon, 239; establishes herself at Djoun, 239; lives the life of a recluse, 240; her ideas on astrology, 241; ideas of a second coming of the Messiah, 241, 270, 287; and Lousteneau, 242; Barker thinks her crazy, 242-3; Wolff's "tiff" with, 243; her letter to Wolff, 243; Wolff's letter to her, 243; her "bastinado" letter, 244; letters to Lord

Stanhope, Lady Hester (contd.)

Strangford, 244-7; her opinion of Abbott, 245; Yaacoub Aga, her enemy, 247; Madden's visit to, 248-52; her establishment, 251; she shows him the mares, 253; refuses to return to England, 253; her courage on horseback, 253; her animation, 254; refuses to receive John Carne, 254; Emir Beahyr's opinion of her, 254; interferes between Miss Williams and Massed, 255-6; death of her brother, 257; loses Miss Williams, 257; welcomes Dr. Meryon, 258; her servants' tricks, 258; her habits, 258; Turkish costumes, 258; sleeps on a plank bed, 259; her cats and kittens, 259; measures time by the sun, 259; her whims, 260; love of conversation, 260; shrewd judgment of people, 261; dislike of her own sex, 261; receives Mrs. Meryon, 261; presents Mrs. Meryon with Turkish robes, 261; makes it difficult for Meryon to return to Europe, 261; strange parting from Meryon, 262; shelters refugees, 263; compares her house to the Tower of Babel, 263; receives Lamartine, 263-7; receives Kinglake, 268-70; letter to, 268; interest in occult science, 269; she prophesies to him, 269; Kinglake believes she is sane, 270; her faith, 270; Sir Richard Burton on, 270; refuses to receive Bowring, 271; Dr. Garnett on, 271-3; interest in astrology, 273; her ill-health, 274; pecuniary troubles, 274, 275; regarded as holy, 275; letters to Meryon, 276, 281-2; refuses to see Mrs. Meryon, 277; has Meryon's bell-wires out, 278-9; writes to Meryon's daughter, 280; refuses to let Meryon have a cottage at Djoun, 281; orders Meryon to burn her letters, 283; orders books to be burnt, 283; her continual smoking, 283; Wednesday her unlucky day, 283; receives Prince Pückler-Muskau,

286-9; question of her marriage to a sheik raised, 289; refuses to see Maximilian, Duke of Bavaria, 289; debts, 290; creditors, 291; letter from Colonel Patrick Campbell, 292; her answer, 292-3; her letter to Moore, the British Consul, 293; letter to the Queen, 293-4; letter to the Duke of Wellington, 294-6; letter to the Speaker, 297-8; letter to Lord Ebrington, 298; letter from Lord Palmerston, 299; reply to Lord Palmerston, 299-301; she repudiates her country, 301, 303; tries to get the correspondence published, 301, 302; arrears of her pension do not reach her, 302; letter from Sir William Napier to *The Times* pleases her, 303; replies to Sir William Napier, 303-4; declares her crime is "to be independent," 304, 305; financial distress, 305; letter to Sir Francis Burdett, 306-7; immures herself at Djoun, 306, 307; death, 307, 308; last letter to Meryon, 307; last moments, 308; funeral, 309; her will, 311, 314-23; Meryon's review of her life, 312; her compensations, 312-13

Stanhope, Lady Hester, and Bruce, her love for, 56; meets him at Gibraltar, 73; their friendship, 74; disparity in age, 74; escorts her to Malta, 74; stays with him at St. Antonio, 77; their flirtation, 78; takes the lead of Lady Hester's expedition, 87, 90; with her at Athens, 91; question of marriage with, 104; her opinion of his character, 106; with him at Brusa, 109; their mutual passion wanes, 166-7; their parting, 167-8, 173; question of their meeting on the Continent, 173, 198; question of breaking off with Bruce raised, 173-4; her distress concerning the part he played in the Lavalette case, 175; goes out of her life, 175

Stanhope, James, 1st Earl Stanhope, 5, 74a

- Stanhope, Hon. James**, early youth, 20, 24; fun with Pitt, 42; Lady Hester starts housekeeping for, 55; Sir John Moore on, 59; travels with his sister, 66; visits Glen Irfon, 67; mentioned in Lady Hester's Will, 68, 311, 314, 315; joins his regiment at Cadix, 74, 80; friendship with Bruce, 82; learns Lady Hester's secret, and shows little sympathy, 98, 103; mentioned by Lady Hester, 122, 185, 229, 234, 235; at Bergen op Zoom, 190; aide de camp to the Duke of York, 191; Lady Hester decides to send for, 198; she writes to him, 232; effect on her of his death, 257; his legacy to Lady Hester, 305
- Stanhope, Lady Lucy Rachel**, birth, 6; character, 9; marriage with Thomas Taylor, 10; death, 190, 191
- Stanhope, Philip Henry**, 4th Earl (Lord Mahon), 20; flees from Chevening, at Erlangen, 21; writes to Lady Hester, 22-3; "charming and incomparable," 24; his whereabouts unknown, 25, 26, 28, 29; leaves Germany, 30; settles near Dover, his marriage, 35; letter from Pitt to, 37*n*.; Lady Hester accuses him of ingratitude, 55, 232; approached on the matter of Lady Hester's debts, 275; reason of her quarrel with him, 296
- Stanhope, Philip Henry**, 5th Earl, his "Life of Pitt" quoted, 31-2
- Stapleton, Mrs.**, 19, 21
- Stars**, Lady Hester and the, 265, 271; *see also* **ASTROLOGY**
- Statue**, Lady Hester's discovery and destruction of a, 198
- Stewart, Sir John**, 83 *and note*
- Strangford, Lord**, Lady Hester's letters to, 244-7
- Suffolk, Lady**, 46
- Sutton, Nassau**, Captain, Pitt's interest in, 38-9; applies for leave, 65; Lady Hester asks him to visit her in Wales, 66; Lady Hester's letters to, 67, 69-71; at Gibraltar, 73-4
- Tartaravan**, Lady Hester's dislike of a, 141
- Taylor, Lady Lucy**, *see* **STANHOPE, LADY LUCY RACHEL**
- Taylor, Mr.**, a friend of Lady Hester, 121, 122
- Tekell, Griselda**, *see* **STANHOPE, LADY GRISELDA**
- Therapia**, Lady Hester at, 95-98; suggested return to, 100, 109
- Thomson, W. M.**, his account of Lady Hester's end, 308
- Thurburn, Mr.**, Colonel Missett's secretary, 124, 172
- Times, The*, quoted, 291-301; Sir William Napier's letter to, about Lady Hester, 303
- Treasure**, story of Lady Hester's "book" for discovery of, 152; the hunt at Ascalon for, 196-8; her superstition concerning, 271
- Tree-planting**, by Lady Hester, 48-9
- Turkish costume**, *see* **DRESS**
- Turin**, Lady Hester visits, 29
- Valentia, Lord**, letter from Lady Hester to, 201
- Valetta**, Lady Hester and Bruce at, 77, 78
- Vaudemont, Princesse de**, a friend of Bruce, 175
- Victoria, Queen**, Lady Hester's extraordinary letter to, 293-4; the answer, 299; Lady Hester reproves her in letter to the Duke of Wellington, 295; and challenges her in letter to the Speaker, 297
- Volunteers**, the Cinque Port, 33, 39
- Wahabees**, the, 138, 139, 140, 146, 151
- Waldershare Park**, 48
- Wales**, Princess of, *see* **CAROLINE**
- Walmer Castle**, volunteering at, 32; Lady Hester at, 32-51; reviews at, 36; Lady Hester's plantation at, 47-8, 49

- Walpole, Hon. Georgiana Mary (afterwards Mrs. Wolff), 242a.
- Warburton, Eliot, his "Crescent and the Cross" quoted, 308
- Waterloo, characteristic note by Lady Hester on, 205a.
- Wedding ceremony, curious, at Palmyra, 158
- Wednesday, Lady Hester's "unlucky day," 283
- Wellington, Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of, said to look forward to Bruce as a son-in-law, 84; Lady Hester's opinion of, 99; Lady Hester writes to, 112, 113; the letter, 116-8; unpopularity of, 222; Lady Hester's letter to, on the matter of her pension, 294-6, 298
- "Wellington des joueurs, Le," Lovenson-Gower so called, 47
- Werry, Mr., 188
- Williams, Elizabeth, with Lady Hester in Wales, 62; with Lady Hester at Malta, 75; her dismissal, 87; Dr. Meryon's letter to, 170-1; rejoins Lady Hester in the East, 211; mentioned by Buckingham, 219; Lady Hester thinks of discharging her, 233, 235; the incident of Wolff's letter to her, 243; Lady Hester's bequest to, 246, 311, 315; her Eastern seclusion, 248; her supposed love affair with Massad, 255-6; her death, 257; mentioned in Lady Hester's Will, 315, 317
- Wikmot, Mrs., 16
- Wilson, Mr., 170
- Wilson, Sir Robert, and the Lavalette case, 175, 226
- Wolff, Dr., travelling in the East, 242 and note; his "tiff" with Lady Hester—his letter to her, 243-4
- Women, Lady Hester's contempt for, 75-6, 261; position of, in her household, 248; her delight at the beauty of Asiatic, 101
- Wraxall, Sir N. W., quoted, 6
- Wynn, Charlotte Williams, quoted, 45a.
- Wynn, Sir Henry Williams, visits Lady Hester, 97; Lady Hester's letters to, 144-7, 163
- Yacoub Aga, "a man of disgraceful character," 244; Lady Hester bastinadoes his messenger, 245; his story of Mr. Abbott, 247; his servants cudgelled by Lady Hester's, 248
- York, Duke of, and Mrs. Clarke, 60 and note, 99; 101; Lady Hester's present to, 127; his kind thought for Lady Hester, 190; appoints her brother his aide de camp, 191
- Youseff Pacha, 137
- Zaym, sent by the Porte to Lady Hester, 198 and note
- Zea, Lady Hester and party at, 95
- Zenobia, referred to, 148, 151



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